

277.3
Smi

6178

61



GILFORD

40
17 20





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/catholicchurchin01smit>

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN NEW YORK



Engd by Charles Beall, New York

*Deus Omnipotens repleat te omni
benedictione*

Pius PP. X

Pope Pius X

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

A HISTORY OF THE NEW YORK DIOCESE FROM ITS
ESTABLISHMENT IN 1808 TO THE PRESENT TIME

BY
THE REV. JOHN TALBOT SMITH, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE TRAINING OF A PRIEST," "HISTORY OF
OGDENSBURG," "THE CHAPLAIN SERMONS," ETC., ETC.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY THE
RIGHT REVEREND JOSEPH F. MOONEY, V.G.

Vol. I

NEW YORK AND BOSTON
HALL & LOCKE COMPANY

BX
1417
.N4
S6
v.1

COPYRIGHTED, 1905, BY
JOHN TALBOT SMITH
NEW YORK.

Nihil obstat :

James McGean, Censor Deputatus.

Imprimatur :

✠ John, Archbishop of New York.

BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

By agreement, the text plates and copyright of this History are to be deposited in the archives and to become the property of the Diocese of New York.

MAR 12 1976

557513

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE PROLOGUE

French and Spanish colonies in North America. — George III gives Quebec freedom of worship. — His American colonies protest. — Why France and Spain aided the American Revolution. — The first Catholics in New York State : missionaries, Colonel Dongan, and the exiled Acadians. — Religious intolerance banished from the colonies by the influence of France and Spain — The American Constitution guarantees freedom of worship. — Address of the first Catholic Bishop to the first President of the Republic 1

CHAPTER II

FIRST YEARS OF THE ORGANIZED CHURCH

The history and character of Archbishop Carroll. — The labors of Rev. Ferdinand Farmer, missionary in New York. — An Irish chaplain of the French fleet first pastor of New York. — St. Peter's on Barclay Street dedicated in presence of the Spanish envoy. — The enterprise of a French consul, Hector St. John. — The priests of Manhattan Island. — Scheme to give a bishop to the Oneida Indians. — Conversion of Elizabeth Bayley Seton. — A distinguished Catholic actress, Charlotte Milmoth. — Appointment of the first Catholic bishop of New York 20

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST BISHOP OF NEW YORK

History and character of Bishop Concanen. — He fails to reach New York. — Rev. Anthony Kohlmann is made administrator. — The Napoleonic wars hinder the Bishop in his second attempt to sail from Naples. — His sickness and death. — The labors of Father Kohlmann and Father Fenwick. — The Germans petition for a priest. — St. Patrick's parish is formed. — The first college established. — The Trappists and the Ursulines open institutions. — Death of Thomas Paine. — A legal battle on the confessional. — The story of Rev. Charles Wharton. — The new cathedral completed and dedicated. — The second bishop of New York, John Connolly, arrives 38

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF BISHOP CONNOLLY

The circumstances of his consecration. — His priests and their fields of labor. — The Catholic colonies of New York State. — Building of the Erie Canal. — Church trustees make trouble. — The career of the Belgian general, Father Malou. — Two convert priests, Fathers Ffrench and Taylor, members of the Irish nobility. — Death and departure reduce the clergy seriously. — An Orange parade and riot in Greenwich Village on the Twelfth of July. — The death of the Bishop 55

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V

BISHOP DUBOIS AND HIS CLERGY

Vicar-General Power administers the diocese. — The popularity of Rev. John Farnum. — His fall from grace, and attempt to start a schism. — His failure and death. — A weekly paper, the *Truth Teller*, founded. — An orphan asylum opened and St. Mary's parish established. — John Dubois named third bishop. — Unwelcome in New York. — His first pastoral letter not printed. — How he labored and journeyed. — He spends two years in Europe collecting money for his diocese. — A Cuban priest of singular virtue and learning. — Increase of churches, priests, and schools. — Trouble from the trustees. — The seminary at Nyack destroyed by fire. — John Hughes of Philadelphia appointed Coadjutor of New York. — A stroke of paralysis disables Bishop Dubois. — Relieved of the diocesan administration. — His death 70

CHAPTER VI

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PARISHES

Number and character of the Catholic people. — The colonies of Jefferson County. — How the churches were built. — Bishop Plessis of Montreal describes St. Patrick's. — The rise of Trusteesism. — Good preachers in demand. — Kindly feeling of the Protestants. — Celebration of St. Patrick's Day. — A noted physician of the time, Dr. Macneven. — The style of Father Levins, editor of the *Green Banner*. — The number and dignity of the private schools. — The variety and combativeness of the Catholic journals. — How the pewholders treated Rev. John McCloskey. — Bishop Hughes takes occasion to attack the Trustees. — In a general meeting he overthrows them 88

CHAPTER VII

PLEASANT RELATIONS WITH THE STATE AND PEOPLE

The Catholics join the Democratic party. — The Whigs fail to win them. — Beneficent legislation. — Contributions of Protestant leaders to Catholic charities. — Governor Seward aids a Catholic criminal. — The story of a Boston convert. — A minister and a physician accept the faith. — A Methodist minister tries to convert the Sulpicians of Montreal. — Two ministers of New York enter the church. — Remarkable story of the Barber family. — Father and son become priests, mother and daughters become nuns. — Conversion of the Dodge family told by Bishop Hughes. — A Lutheran minister, Maximilian Oertel, enters the Church 106

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE KNOWNOTHING PARTY

The remarkable rise of the Orange Society. — Its conspiracy in behalf of the Duke of Cumberland. — Rebuked by the courts, and by the Prince of Wales. — The flood of anti-Catholic pamphlets. — The career of Rev. Mr. Brownlee. — The native dread of foreign immigration. — Proposals to limit the suffrage. — The love of the Catholics for America, because of its liberty. — Error of McMaster, the historian. — The effects of Orangeism become universal. — Catholics suffer petty persecution. — Outrages of various kinds. — The burning of churches. — The famous imposture of Maria Monk. — Her book and its wide circulation. — The fraud exposed by Editor Stone. — Fate of the impostors 124

CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER IX

THE CHARACTER AND CAREER OF ARCHBISHOP HUGHES

Some new conditions. — The *Herald* on Bishop Dubois. — Personal appearance and general character of Dr. Hughes. — His attack on Trusteeism. — Also on certain editors. — The *Herald* attacks him. — His crushing reply. — His interview with Mayor Morris. — He prevents a Native-American riot. — His censure of Senator Brooks. — He ridicules Horace Greeley. — His stern rebuke of D'Arcy McGee. — He supports Lincoln and Seward. — His great influence at Rome. — Successful labors for Church and people 140

CHAPTER X

THE PEOPLE AND THE CLERGY

The miseries of emigration. — Where the early immigrants settled. — A colonization meeting in New York. — Its orator publicly rebuked by Dr. Hughes. — Secret societies among the Irish. — An Irish journal attacks American bishops and priests. — The sharp condemnation of Dr. Hughes. — The early Catholic families in New York. — Distinguished men of the time. — Hon. John Kelly in Congress. — He silences Samuel Marshall. — Racial disputes. — The formation of the clergy. — Their general character. — Typical priests: Fathers Power, Cummings, Quinn, Preston, and Noethen. — The converts who became priests. — The early missionaries 158

CHAPTER XI

THE GROWTH AND FORM OF PARISH ORGANIZATION

The first parishes and churches. — Church property and its tenure. — A bill in the Legislature to harass its holders. — Church architecture and decoration. — Parish methods and customs. — Brownson speaks in behalf of the young natives. — Archbishop Hughes' opinion of it. — The schools and the school question. — Death of the Public School Society. — The foundation of various charities. — Levi Silliman Ives founds the Protectory 175

CHAPTER XII

THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

The early communities fail to take root. — The Sisters of Charity and their history. — Remarkable success after a crisis. — The Ladies of the Sacred Heart open an academy, which becomes famous. — Their rule and method. — The Sisters of Mercy begin various good works. — The Ursulines as teachers. — The School Sisters of Notre Dame serve the Germans. — The Sisters of the Good Shepherd. — Remarkable work of the Redemptorists. — The Christian Brothers open a school. — The Fathers of Mercy serve the French. — The Jesuits begin their work. — A new American community, the Paulists 193

CHAPTER XIII

CHURCH LEGISLATION — THE CATHOLIC PRESS

The first synod is held at Fordham. — It enacts thirty-three laws. — The pastoral letter irritates the editors. — The first provincial council held with splendor. — Its six decrees. — The pastoral letter rebukes certain journals. — The second provincial council. — Its remarkable letter on the Pope. — A sensation in Europe. — The Pope prints a translation for general distribution. — The third provincial council. — Its seven decrees and pastoral letter. — Archbishop Hughes explains and defends his methods 210

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AGAINST CATHOLICS

Formation of the Native-American party. — McMaster's opinion contradicted. — Rioting begins. — Public excitement aroused by street-preachers. — New York kept in order by Dr. Hughes. — Gavazzi and his followers. — The birth of the Knownothing party. — Its principles and methods. — The cruel experience of Archbishop Bedini, papal delegate. — He flies the country. — Success of the Knownothings at the polls. — Their failure in the Presidential election. — Pastoral letter of Dr. Hughes on the situation. — An attack on the Grand Duke of Tuscany. — A controversy with a general. — Disappearance of the Knownothing party 227

CHAPTER XV

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE CHURCH

The Oxford movement in America. — Father Walworth's account. — The controversy in the Episcopal body sends many converts into the Church. — Rev. William Everett, Rev. Augustine Hewit, and Rev. Clarence Walworth. — Episcopal monasteries and their failure. — Rev. Edgar P. Wadhams enters the Church. — Bishop Levi Silliman Ives and his friends. — Rev. James Roosevelt Bayley. — Professor Anderson of Columbia. — Rev. J. V. Huntington. — Orestes Brownson and Father Isaac Hecker. — The literary and journalistic skill of the converts. — Their advocacy of the press 243

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLOSE OF THE HUGHES ADMINISTRATION

The beginning of the Civil War. — Catholic feeling on the slavery question as a war issue. — Dr. Hughes takes his position and defends it. — His opinion of the struggle. — Correspondence with Lincoln and Seward. — His support of the Government. — He accepts a perilous mission to Europe. — His reasons for accepting it. — His welcome abroad. — His speech on returning widely criticised. — The evil condition of the Government. — The draft riots in New York. — The gallant Sixty-Ninth. — Strange incidents of the time. — James A. McMaster imprisoned. — Great services of Dr. Hughes to the Federal Government. — His influence at home and abroad. — His death and funeral 260

CHAPTER XVII

CARDINAL McCLOSKEY

Character of this prelate. — His early training and career. — Rector of Fordham College. — Coadjutor to Archbishop Hughes. — First Bishop of Albany. — His successful administration. — Protest against transfer to New York. — Cordial reception in the metropolis. — The work of Dr. Hughes continued with a different method. — The training of the clergy. — The rise of schools and charities. — He becomes cardinal amid public rejoicing. — The dedication of the cathedral. — The holding of the Fourth Provincial Council. — The figures of progress. — His last years 277

CONTENTS

xi

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY

The priests mostly of European birth. — Training of a native clergy in Troy and Rome. — Results of the training. — Clerical qualities and traits. — The social life of the clergy. — Liberals and conservatives. — The school question. — The race division. — Political affairs. — The gospel for non-Catholics. — Share in Church government. — Eminent and typical priests. — Revs. William Starrs, William Quinn, Thomas Preston, Michael O'Farrell, William Clowry, Richard Brennan, John Larkin, William Everett, Arthur Donnelly, Anthony Schwenniger, Edward McGlynn, Isaac Hecker, Augustine Hewit, Patrick McSweeney, Richard Lalor Burtzell . 295

CHAPTER XIX

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PARISHES

The character of immigration. — The Catholic natives and their standing. — Increase of parishes and churches. — Value of the latter. — Improvement in public services. — The popular devotions. — The library and the Sunday-school. — The popular societies. — The great public celebrations. — Popular feeling on the Froude incident, the loss of the Temporal Power, and the Bismarck persecution. — The attack on the *New York Herald*. — The work of the Catholic Union. — Eminent Catholics of the time. — Various abuses. — Their effect on the people . 312

ILLUSTRATIONS

Pope Pius X.	Frontispiece
Right Reverend Luke Concanen 1808-1810	Facing page 41
Right Reverend John Connolly 1814-1825	Facing page 58
Right Reverend John Dubois 1826-1842	Facing page 76
Most Reverend John Hughes 1838-1864	Facing page 146
St. Joseph's Seminary at Troy	Facing page 168
Mount St. Vincent 1875	Facing page 194
Cardinal McCloskey 1864-1885	Facing page 277
Right Rev. William Quinn	Facing page 312

INTRODUCTION

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND JOSEPH F. MOONEY, V.G.

INTRODUCTION

THE writer of this Foreword believes that he has but a superfluous task to perform. The material that is offered to the reader in the present History of the Diocese of New York, and the manner in which that material is presented, render any attempt to magnify the excellence of either a work of supererogation. A most cursory perusal of the History will verify the opinion here expressed. Sketches of the rise and progress of the Church within the State of New York, from time to time, have been published. The names of Archbishop Bayley and Dr. John Gilmary Shea will be readily recalled as having been associated with most praiseworthy work in this direction. These distinguished scholars, who were richly gifted with the true historical instinct and spirit, supplied almost alone the entire body of information which we have of the early years of the diocese. To them is due the credit of having unearthed documents and saved from oblivion precious material, that will ever be invaluable to the ecclesiastical historian. Dr. Shea devoted his whole life to gathering the records of the early Church in all parts of America. As Dr. Smith tells us elsewhere, his work has been the foundation of the present volume in the essentials up to the year 1867, at which date Dr. Shea's history of the Church in America finds its conclusion.

It is, however, a comparatively long time since these books appeared. More than one epoch, marked by events that were history-making in their nature and their results, has been turned in the life of the nation as well as of the Church in the United

States. Every decade since has witnessed striking changes in the externals, at least, of religion in every diocese. To comprehend them in their full bearings, to see them in mutual relations, and to give them proper proportions in any mental picture of the past will surely tax whatever resources the historical student of the future may have at his command. How necessary, therefore, the labor, and how praiseworthy the intention that aim at making his task less difficult. Certainly to no more worthy purpose could literary talent and genuine religious sentiment be devoted. Both will be found in the following pages.

For some time those who naturally would be expected to give thought to the matter have realized that a history, in the best accepted sense of the word, of the diocese should be written. It was not that all that had been done previously was without merited appreciation, but rather was it deemed that the opportune moment had come to place in the hands of the public a volume which, in its interesting presentation of fact and occurrence and its graphic description of persons, its thoughtful survey of the conditions, and its sympathetic considerations covering the elements of the problem, would be worthy of the project and creditable to the author.

What the generality of readers of this book will seek will be, of course, a consecutive and adequate story of the diocese from the beginning. The illuminating facts narrated and the well-reasoned views and just comments thereon give assurance that their desire will be fulfilled. The practiced pen, the literary qualifications, and the intellectual equipment that were required for the satisfactory composition of the book are conspicuous throughout. The helpful divisions into which it has been cast as well as the interesting and enlightening topics treated under the headings of the various chapters will, undoubtedly, be

acceptable to the reader and add to his pleasure and information.

In fact the need of a wide, deep, and truthful knowledge of the history of the Church is recognized keenly in our day. She feels on the one hand that she has nothing to fear from the largest diffusion of such knowledge, as she feels on the other hand that too long her enemies have had a free hand in their attempts to falsify her record and to sully her fair name. The saying of De Maistre, "That history for three hundred years had been one great conspiracy against truth," she had but too well experienced. It is true, much gross and ludicrous falsification that was rife in the past is no longer in vogue, and that in our country, at least, there is a disposition to mete out to her considerate treatment. Not always however, it must be confessed, with success.

The point of the application of this remark will be seen, if we advert to what is being done at present under the guise of history, or by studied silence, to deprive a Catholic naval hero of the Revolution of his true place in history, and Spain's Catholic Isabella, and Columbus himself, of their glory in the discovery of America.

The history of the Church, therefore, in order to defend her and to extend her just prestige, must be known and studied, not only in its broader phases but as enacted within the limits of States and dioceses of the Union. Both New York State and New York Diocese afford a rich and promising field for the purpose. Within their borders are the scenes of many a thrilling deed, inspired by heroic faith away back in the earliest Colonial times. A Catholic Dongan, somewhat later, is inseparably connected with the civic and political charter of New York City's rights and liberties. And when the first place of Catholic worship was to be established within the limits of the present diocese,

it was effected principally by the aid of the representatives of the Catholic nations which had made the winning of American freedom possible. In course of time were to follow the troublesome period of the Trustee System, the period of heated religious controversy, the period of the discussion of the Free School System, and the period of Knownothingism. These matters, public in their nature, bore upon the life itself of the diocese, affected its fortunes, and no history would be complete that did not take them into account.

But it is not intended here to give even a summary of the contents of the present volume. Its author has done his work well. He has attained the end he set out to achieve. It entailed much hard and prolonged labor, much delving into and consulting of musty records and folios and much nice discrimination in the selection of material that would be suitable. The outcome, we think, must be pronounced a success. We hope, consequently, that the appreciation met with by this History will correspond with the labor and the scholarship spent upon it, and that it will find a wide circle of readers that will not be confined to the people of the diocese of New York.

*Joseph F. Mooney. S. A.
Dean General of the
Diocese of New York*

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

CHAPTER I

THE PROLOGUE



Pius VII

THE history of the Catholic Church in that territory now embraced by the diocese of New York is of course quite local, and therefore of minor importance when compared with the general history of the Church in the United States. However, its roots are so entwined with the general history; the growth of the metropolis has been so swift and splendid; the growth of Catholicity has so kept pace with the

city, that the interested will find in this local history a story rather more than local, a vivid reflection of the growth of the Church in the Republic, a single example whose light illuminates and explains the entire field of Catholic development. It will astonish even the learned to discover in this local history that the Island of Manhattan saw, as it were, the summing up of French, English and Spanish rule on this continent in the most

2 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

remarkable article of the American Constitution, that by which freedom of worship is guaranteed to citizens and the Federal Government deprived itself of the right to meddle with the religion of American citizens. In a large way it may be said that this article of our Constitution contains the residuum of European influence in North America.

The colonists from France and Spain had, by the middle of the eighteenth century, fairly surrounded the English colonies with a line of forts and settlements from Maine to Florida that shut them off from further movement westward, from the great waterways of the remote West, from the Ohio, the lakes and Lake Champlain. Had France and Spain taken proper interest in their possessions, the original thirteen colonies would have remained bound to the Atlantic coast. When finally England had stripped France of Canada and Spain of Florida, the treaties with those nations bound her to respect the religion of the Catholic dwellers in the conquered territory, and to permit its free exercise. The legislation known as the Quebec Act secured for the Catholic subjects of George III, in all territory outside the American colonies, the free exercise of their religion. Against this toleration the American colonists protested vigorously. Their protest had no effect, and when their own battle with the mother country began their agents turned promptly to France and Spain for the necessary aid in the struggle. These nations provided a good part of the military outfit, sent their fleets, in time recognized the new Republic, and established their ambassadors in New York. Without the aid and countenance of France and Spain the colonies would have lost the fight for independence. Gratefully aware of the fact, their gratitude took permanent form in that amendment of the Constitution which guaranteed to American citizens freedom of religion. The guarantee was really given to the Catholics of the

Republic, whose colonial history had been one long record of mean persecution, and given while the framers of the Constitution fashioned that famous instrument in the presence of the ambassadors of France and Spain.

The territory once dominated by France embraced not only what is called British Canada to-day, but also the greater part of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, northern and western New York, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, southward to the line of the Spanish possessions. Capable historians have fully described the remarkable achievements of the French missionaries, explorers, hunters and settlers of New France. From the seat of Government at Quebec these daring men went as far as human power could carry them, established a long line of forts on the rivers and lakes, traded with the Indians, and encouraged the missionary in his effort to evangelize the entire Indian race—Algonquin, Iroquois, Huron, Illinois, and the little tribes that lived in their shadow. While the English colonist either banished or killed the natives, and could find in his heart no sentiment of Christianity or philanthropy for the redmen, the French governors never forgot the essential need of the savages, and did much for the spread of the gospel among them.

All their achievements came to naught when France surrendered to England her American possessions. King George III by royal proclamation in 1763 divided the territory, won by conquest from both France and Spain, into the four provinces of Canada, Grenada, East Florida and West Florida. There was considerable confusion as to boundary lines, with the result that for the territory of the remote West there was little real government. The British commander-in-chief ruled the inhabitants through the army officers whom he appointed, and in consequence the unfortunate settlers remained for many years at the mercy

4 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

of petty tyrants. General Gage issued a proclamation on April 8, 1772, ordering "all those who have established themselves upon the Ouabache, whether at St. Vincent's or elsewhere, to quit those countries instantly and without delay, and to retire at their choice into some one of the colonies of His Majesty." However, innumerable protests had reached the English ministry directly from the settlers, and also through the French ambassador in London, reminding the Government of the treaty rights of the settlers. Their condition had been under consideration for some time, and in 1774 Parliament passed a law known to history as the Quebec Act, which fixed permanently and honorably the civil condition of the inhabitants on the basis of the treaty conditions and the English law. It was entitled "An Act for making more effectual provision for the government of the province of Quebec, in North America."

This measure gave to the province of Canada all that territory which is now embraced by the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, in addition to the old region of Quebec, and the whole was known thenceforward as the Province of Quebec. With regard to the religion of the inhabitants of Quebec the Act had some remarkable language, which is quoted as the point of this prologue: "And, for the more perfect security and ease of the minds of the inhabitants of the said province, it is hereby declared, that His Majesty's subjects, professing the religion of the Church of Rome, of and in the said province of Quebec, may have, hold and enjoy the free exercise of the religion of the Church of Rome, subject to the King's supremacy, declared and established by an Act made in the first year of the reign of Queen Elisabeth, over all the dominions and countries which then did or thereafter should belong to the imperial crown of this realm; and that the clergy of the said Church may hold, receive and enjoy

their accustomed dues and rights with respect to such persons only as shall profess their religion." The chief effect of this law was to declare the Catholic Church free from all the pains and penalties of the penal laws under which the Church suffered in the British Isles and in the English colonies, and to make it, in a new way, the established church of Quebec. Its more remote and abiding effect was to save to the British Empire its northern domain in the struggle with the American colonies, that began only a year after the Act passed the Parliament.

When Congress sent its agents to invite the co-operation of Quebec in the fight for independence, the Catholic clergy and people remembered the wise and generous policy of England and also the persecuting spirit of the colonists. That very Act which secured to the people of Quebec their primary rights had been lampooned, denounced and cursed in every form by the Americans, and catalogued as one of the wrongs inflicted upon them by the mother country. Even the Continental Congress had characterized it as "in an extreme degree dangerous." The Canadians declined the invitation of the colonies and remained faithful to the English King.

The territory over which the King of Spain exercised sovereign power included all the present Gulf States and extended westward to the Pacific, northward as far as Kentucky. At one time the immense tract known as Louisiana was in possession of the French, who ceded it to the King of Spain as soon as the fall of Quebec had made it clear that France could not hold its other territory any length of time. New Orleans was the seat of Government for the French domination, while the Spanish dominion was ruled from Havana for the Floridas, and from Mexico for Texas and the farther West. When Napoleon upset the political conditions of Europe and dictated terms to the reigning monarchs, New Orleans had become the capital of the Spanish domain.

Spain ceded the territory to France, and in 1803 Napoleon sold it to the American Republic for the sum of \$15,000,000, almost as an act of war against England, and with the design of giving the English a powerful rival in North America. Florida proper remained in possession of Spain until the year 1821, when it passed to the United States by treaty and purchase. The ancient enmity between England and Spain had its effect upon the history of Florida. The first permanent settlement in Florida was made at the present city of St. Augustine by the daring explorer and general, Melendez. From this point the missionaries sent out by Spain directed their work in behalf of the Indians, and after almost a century of effort succeeded in converting many of the wild tribes of the peninsula, and introducing among them the more necessary arts of civilization. It needed but a long period of peace to put the missions on a firm foundation, and to turn the wandering tribes into mild and industrious farmers.

Unfortunately that period was denied them through the greed and hostility of the English colonists of Carolina. The singular hatred of the Anglo-Saxon for the Indian never had better illustration than in the onslaught of the Carolina colonists on the peaceful and half-Christian tribes dwelling on the banks of the Florida rivers. Without other provocation than their own greed they began about the year 1700 to attack wantonly the Indian settlements. In that year one village on the Flint River lost six hundred of its people by death or capture, and capture meant being sold into slavery. In the next year a small army of English with Alabama Indians fell upon the mission of St. Mark, the centre of the Appalachian colony, utterly destroyed it, killed several hundred and carried over a thousand into captivity. All the mission stations in that neighborhood were broken up, the Indians scattered, their organization destroyed, and the entire tribe of

Apalaches so reduced that out of seven thousand only four hundred could be found afterwards. In this slaughter the English had been greatly helped by a tribe known as the Namassees.

The same tribe organized a confederacy against the English and waged war on their former friends in 1715, but they were defeated and driven southward. From this war of over fifteen years the missions never recovered, and when, in 1763, Spain was forced to surrender Florida to the English in exchange for the city of Havana, captured by an English fleet, they disappeared altogether. Florida was restored to Spain in 1783 and remained in her possession until sold to the United States in 1821, but the work of evangelization never reached its old efficiency and success. The poor Indians became wanderers, Seminoles as they called themselves, and in the swamps of Florida fought a bitter fight, afterwards, against the descendants of their Anglo-Saxon destroyers.

The memory of these things had not disappeared from the Spanish mind when the American colonies began their war with England. The year after France made its treaty of alliance with the new Republic, Spain declared war against England, and sent its envoy, Senor Miralles, to New York. The Spanish governor of New Orleans, Don Bernardo Galvez, undertook to drive out the English from their Floridan strongholds, and succeeded admirably. He surprised the forts at Manchac, Baton Rouge, Mobile and Pensacola one after another, and restored the Spanish rule.

At the same time in the Northwest, the veteran missionary, Father Gibault, used his influence with the settlers at Vincennes, Kaskaskia and Detroit, to attach them to the cause of the Republic, and aided the generals, Rogers and Clark, who had undertaken the conquest of the territory from the English, with all his power. Thus was the pitiful destruction of the Indian missions in the French and Spanish territory avenged. The rulers of France and

8 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

Spain may have had little or no sympathy with the cause of the colonists for itself, but they rejoiced to aid in stripping England of the immense possessions which in her greed she would not share with them. Their influence was strong and well used in the councils of the new Republic.

The social and political situation of Catholics in the colonies up to the hour of the Revolution had never been pleasant or encouraging; there were many laws against them on the statute-books, which were not harshly enforced, because Catholics remained few and timid; and only when events had practically forced the English colonists to adopt the policy of toleration in matters of religion for the young Republic, did Catholic citizens venture to defend their rights as citizens.

The settlement of Maryland by the body of colonists gathered together under the protection and leadership of Lord Baltimore was the first attempt of English Catholics to settle in American territory. The enterprise was planned with great prudence and sagacity. The charter for it obtained by Lord Baltimore from Charles I has won for the Calverts and for the Catholics singular distinction among the colonists of that day. Bancroft wrote: "Calvert deserves to be ranked among the most wise and benevolent lawgivers of all ages. He was the first in the history of the Christian world to seek for religious security and peace by the practice of justice and not by the exercise of power; to plan the establishment of popular institutions with the enjoyment of liberty of conscience; to advance the career of civilization by recognizing the rightful equality of all Christian sects. The asylum of Catholics was the spot where, in a remote corner of the world, on the banks of rivers which as yet had hardly been explored, the mild forbearance of a proprietary adopted religious freedom as the basis of the State."

The first colonists landed in Maryland on March 25, 1634. The larger part were Catholics, but some were Protestants, all devoted to Lord Baltimore, however. The toleration extended to all beliefs, and, at a time when the other colonies, with one or two exceptions, were indulging in some form of persecution, drew to Maryland a set of ingrates, who in time wrested from Lord Baltimore the government of the colony, passed laws of intolerance, and persecuted their Catholic hosts to the effusion of blood. Although they were driven out in turn, Lord Baltimore had no peace and the Catholics were very much tried through the Cromwell period. Only when the Stuarts were restored, and the laws passed by the proprietary had an opportunity to act, did peace finally come to the colony of Maryland.

Very few Catholics were to be found in the other colonies. The first missionary who labored among the Iroquois, the Jesuit Father, Isaac Jogues, had been captured in 1643 by a party of Mohawks while on his way to the Huron missions in western Canada. All his companions were slain by the Mohawks, and he himself badly mutilated. During his captivity he made the acquaintance of a famous Dutchman at that time, an experienced trader with the Indians, Arendt Van Curler, and with his aid the priest escaped to Albany, where he was kindly treated, his ransom paid to the incensed savages, and his passage arranged for to New Amsterdam. Governor William Kieft received him honorably, lodged him in the fort, gave him a suit of clothes, and finally sent him home in a ship. During his stay in the Dutch city he found a poor Portuguese woman and a young Irishman, whose confessions he heard.

The next year, 1644, another Jesuit, Father Bressani, enjoyed the same experience—rescue from the Iroquois, ransom, hospitality, and free passage home, together with letters of recom-

mendation from the Dutch governor. At times the Maryland Jesuits made a journey to Manhattan, but no Catholics resided there until the advent of the famous Colonel Thomas Dongan, officer in King James' army, and afterwards Earl of Limerick, who was appointed governor of the colony of New York in 1682, and held office up to 1687. His first action was to establish a chapel in Fort James, south of Bowling Green, and to appoint two priests to serve it at a salary of sixty pounds a year. A Latin school was opened by two Jesuits, to whom the gentry of the town sent their children. In October, following out the instructions of the head of the colony, the Duke of York, he convened the first legislative assembly, and among other transactions passed the Bill of Rights, in which the principle of religious freedom was recognized. It declared that "no person or persons which profess faith in God by Jesus Christ shall at any time be anyways molested, punished, disquieted or called in question for any difference of opinion or matter of religious concernment, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of the province; but that all and every such person or persons may, from time to time and at all times, freely have and fully enjoy his or their judgments or consciences in matters of religion throughout all the province; they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly, and not using this liberty to licentiousness nor to the civil injury or outward disturbance of others."

This auspicious beginning was marked by the most capable and energetic administration that ever a colonial governor gave to his province. The English Revolution of 1688 changed everything, however. Dongan and the Catholic officers of the crown had to fly for their lives before the murderous spirit of such fanatics as Lesler, who seized the government of the colony in New York. When order was restored the situation of the Catholics in the two colonies which had witnessed their generosity and liberality of

view became wretched. The English king deprived Lord Baltimore of his rights as proprietary, New York and Maryland were made royal provinces, the Church of England was established in both and the Catholics had to pay towards its support, toleration was abolished, and in New York no Catholic could vote or hold office.

The expulsion of the Acadians from their colony in Nova Scotia flung some thousands of Catholics into the colonies under the most harrowing conditions. The final struggle between France and England was about to begin for possession of North America; and evidently with the intention of clearing the ground the English government authorized the barbarous expulsion of its French subjects from the little province of Acadie, now known as Nova Scotia.

On various pretences the British governor, Lawrence, assembled these poor people at a single point, and without warning shipped them like cattle on a number of transports to the colonies. Their cattle were slaughtered or given to the English settlers, their houses, barns, schools and churches were burned, their lands and other properties were confiscated, families were separated never to be brought together again, and without money, without more than the clothes on their bodies and the rations supplied by the Government, seven thousand men, women and children were scattered along the Atlantic coast among the unfriendly colonists, to suffer fierce hardships, half of them to perish miserably. Two thousand were landed in the colony of Massachusetts, and so won the pity of Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson that he offered to stand sponsor for a signed remonstrance to the British government from the leading exiles. Having no further trust in their merciless rulers, the Acadians declined the offer, and shifted as best they could throughout the colony. A few of the gentlefolk were main-

12 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

tained by the charity of the colony, the laborers were put to work under indentures, which made them practically paupers or slaves, for they were bound to their master's land and could not visit outside the township without fine or whipping. Public worship was not allowed them, and if priests ever visited them it was done secretly.

As quickly as possible half the number made their way to Canada or St. Domingo, so that by the year of Independence only a few hundred could be found in the colony. Their story was repeated, more disastrously even, in the lot of the exiles shipped to the other colonies. In New York the adults were bound out to labor, and the children were placed in Protestant homes to be brought up Protestants; the poor unfortunates were liable to arrest at any time, and on one occasion by a general order were locked up in the county jails; those who ran away were pursued and punished; and those who wished to depart for more favorable places at their own expense were refused the privilege. In Pennsylvania they were roughly treated, and in Maryland their Catholic brethren were forbidden to give them aid. Virginia refused to harbor them, and her allotment was sent to Liverpool. Carolina showed them sympathy, and helped some hundreds to reach France and others to reach Louisiana. Georgia maintained her allotment a winter, helped them to build boats in the spring, and set them adrift on the Atlantic. Naturally the Acadians made desperate efforts to get to Canada, to Louisiana and to St. Domingo, and hardship killed great numbers. Many of the young men joined the army of Washington and had some revenge on their barbarous rulers. A number settled on the shores of Lake Champlain and others in Maine on the River St. John, at Madawaska. It was one of history's little ironies that the English claimed from the United States the northern portion of Maine in 1842, on the

ground that the territory had been settled by her citizens—her subjects—the subjects whom she had robbed, starved, exiled, and persecuted to the last degree of shame !

The Acadian exiles therefore added nothing to the Catholic body in the colonies, and the seven thousand had practically disappeared by the beginning of the Revolution. The incident shows clearly the anti-Catholic temper of the colonists.

The situation of the Catholics in the year 1765, when they numbered about twenty-five thousand, was this: In all the colonies except Pennsylvania they were political aliens, unable to hold office or to vote, subject to all kinds of petty persecution, condemned to worship in secret, insulted in the public meetings and the public journals, taxed to support the State church, and always under the social ban. The condition of the Church in North America at the same time was deplorable. The possessions of France north of Louisiana, and the Spanish domain of Florida, had fallen into the hands of England, the missions had disappeared, and only Quebec retained freedom to practise the Catholic religion. It was the darkest hour of the history of the Church in North America ; happily also it proved to be the hour before the dawn.

The Quebec Act was passed by the English Parliament in 1774, and its establishment of toleration for the Catholic faith raised a great bother. But greater questions were now come to the front, and in a very short time the Quebec Act was forgotten in the momentous preliminaries of the Revolution. As soon as the clearer heads perceived the nature of the struggle begun with England, they knew that independence was to be won only by a bloody and long struggle, in which the Catholic nations of France and Spain might be important allies. Quebec itself, thoroughly organized and thoroughly Catholic, would be needed as an ally or a member of the confederation. Before this thought differences

of religion began to lose outline. The temper of the bigots did not soften, but the temper of the times did, to such an extent that the bigots were suppressed for a while, and the Catholic citizen began to display his religion more freely; and finally incidents of significance began to occur with a frequency and boldness not to be gainsaid.

The first was an order from General Washington prohibiting the observance of Pope's Day in camp, which was the American form of celebrating November 5, Guy Fawkes' Day, the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. The words of Washington are well worth reading: "As the Commander-in-Chief has been apprised of a design formed for the observance of that ridiculous and childish custom of burning the effigy of the Pope, he cannot help expressing his surprise that there should be officers and soldiers in this army so void of common sense as not to see the impropriety of such a step at this juncture—at a time when we are soliciting, and have really obtained, the friendship and alliance of the people of Canada, whom we ought to consider as brethren embarked in the same cause—the defence of the liberty of America; at this juncture, and under such circumstances, to be insulting their religion, is so monstrous as not to be suffered or excused; indeed, instead of offering the most remote insult, it is our duty to address public thanks to these, our brethren, as to them we are indebted for every late happy success over the common enemy in Canada." It need scarcely be added that before this withering rebuke in a military order the celebration of Pope's Day forever disappeared from the calendar. Washington was then negotiating with the Catholic Indians of Maine for their aid in the struggle. He obtained it from their representatives, who came to see him when the chief officers of the colony of Massachusetts had promised to provide them with priests.

At the time the General Court of the colony was not overburdened with priests for Indian missions, and, what was worse, knew not where to find even one to satisfy the Maine tribes and keep them attached to the American cause; but after a little they discovered a Father de la Mothe, whom the British had imprisoned in New York for saying mass there without permission, and him they sent to the red allies in Maine. On January 26, 1776, Congress commissioned Rev. L. C. de Lotbinière chaplain of two Canadian regiments, formed by Arnold in Montreal, and afterwards entitled Congress' Own. On February 15 of the same year, a resolution appointed Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, commissioners to Canada to bring about the adhesion of the Quebec province; and by special invitation of Congress, Rev. John Carroll, a priest of Maryland, was invited to join the commissioners and make clear to Canadians, as only a priest could, the honorable intentions of Congress towards Catholic citizens. This commission might have worked wonders with a people who had so little love for England that neither the English governor of Quebec nor the good bishop of the same city could induce them to take up arms against the colonists; but the bigotry and stupidity of John Jay — whose address to the people of Great Britain, in behalf of the colonies, so teemed with insults and slanders against the Catholic Church that a translation of it was all that the English needed to help them hold the loyalty or neutrality of Quebec — spiked the guns of the commission, and Quebec was lost to the Republic forever.

A host of Catholic officers, young, brilliant, brave and capable, joined the army of Congress, eager for military glory, hazardous enterprise and revenge upon England; among them Lafayette, Kosciusko, and Pulaski, so well known in popular history, and the less known Tronson du Coudray, drowned in the Schuylkill in the

fall of 1776, and Mottin de la Balme, killed later in an attack on Detroit; while the home Catholics furnished to the cause such soldiers as Moylan of the dragoons and Barry of the navy. At the funeral of Tronson du Coudray Congress attended, for the first time, a Catholic service; so that Benedict Arnold, after becoming traitor, could complain bitterly of this most unseemly behavior and unchristian condescension on the part of "your mean and profligate Congress." In February of 1778, came the treaty with France, by which the old enemy of England recognized the new Republic and sent a fleet into American waters under the command of the Count d'Estaing. When this admiral cast anchor in a Rhode Island harbor, that colony had the good taste to wipe off its statute books the law which denied freedom of worship to Catholics. The French admiral sent out an address to the French of the North and West, the French of old Quebec, in the name of the French King, inviting them to join the American cause. Undoubtedly it would have carried its point had not all such effort been discounted by the enterprise of John Jay. Even under the embarrassing circumstances its influence went far and wide, and strengthened the heart and cleared the vision of the missionary priest, Father Gibault, to whose influence Generals Rogers and Clark owed a great part of their success in seizing the Detroit territory and securing the neutrality and friendliness of the Illinois tribes on the Western frontier. So highly did Virginia think of the Rev. Peter Gibault's services that its legislature in 1780 passed a resolution of praise and thanks in his honor. France sent its ambassadors to the new Republic in 1778, and Spain did the same the next year, after its declaration of war against England. Conrad Alexander Gerard and Don Juan Miralles were the first representatives of the diplomatic corps. The latter took sick while on a visit to Washington in his camp at Morristown, died in a few

days, and was buried with military pomp and Catholic services by the great man; and a few days later Congress attended in a body his mass of requiem sung in St. Joseph's Church in Philadelphia.

With Congress attending mass on occasions, Massachusetts providing Catholic priests for the Indians, and the Government using men like Father Carroll and Father Gibault to augment its territory and strengthen its position; with the army filled by French officers and Catholics of all nationalities, a French fleet in American waters, and Catholic ambassadors in the capital city, it is not a cause for wonder that public opinion softened rapidly in regard to the twenty-five thousand Catholics of the Republic. The evidence of the change is seen more plainly in the constitutions adopted by the different colonies as soon as they became States. New Hampshire adopted a temporary and meagre constitution in 1776, entirely favorable to Catholics, although sixteen years later it excluded Catholics from all State offices; New Jersey temporized, and softened its language, but nevertheless excluded Catholics from office while acknowledging their rights of conscience; Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia placed all citizens on an equality before the law, no matter what their creed. These constitutions were all formed in 1776. New York, in 1777, had a severe struggle with John Jay before it secured a constitution quite fair to Catholics. Connecticut adopted a constitution that read honestly, but could be interpreted harshly against Catholics. South Carolina, in 1778, established Protestantism as the State religion; North Carolina excluded Catholics from office, and Georgia followed Connecticut. The old bigotry died hard, but nevertheless before the logic of events it yielded up the ghost. The final struggle came, the last agony, when the Republic came to form the Constitution of 1789.

Charles Pinckney of South Carolina proposed that a clause should be introduced preventing the Federal and State governments from imposing religious tests, and this clause was introduced at the end of the sixth Article, where we read: "but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." This clause did not pass without much acrimonious discussion, but that it did pass shows how far the old temper had softened under the influence of France and Spain. Among the amendments proposed, the most interesting was that which the constitution of Virginia had foreshadowed some years before, a thing precisely unique in the history of constitutions: a declaration of the State's incompetency to manage the consciences of men. It was enacted that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Considering the temper of these times, it seems almost incredible that a law of such a character could have emanated from the Congress, even with so noble a soul as Washington in the presidential chair. Whatever the motives and circumstances which gave it birth, it was the crowning glory of the Constitution and the climax of Catholic happiness. Henceforward the persecuted minority might still be persecuted, but not with the sanction and co-operation of the law. It is not a matter for surprise that the Catholics of the country, led by Rev. John Carroll, Charles Carroll, Daniel Carroll, Dominick Lynch and Thomas Fitzsimons, all men of mark throughout the Revolution, should have presented to Washington an address of congratulation upon his becoming the President of the United States. The confidence which dictated the address was based upon the services of the Catholics to the Republic, the services of France and Spain, the blood and treasure of native Catholics; the persecuted minority had no further

need to walk in secret places, but could hold their heads high, as having done a manful part, far more than their share, in the great work of establishing a free government. No man could gainsay them that glory, not even John Jay of New York.

It was more than a coincidence that in the same year when the first President took his seat, the Pope should have named John Carroll Bishop of Baltimore. The First Bishop of the Republic presented the address to the First President of the Republic. France and Spain were gone, and England, too, for that matter, ruling only diminished Quebec; and here faced each other the heirs to their kingdom, the representatives of the principles at stake, the Protestant President of English stock, and the Catholic Bishop of Irish blood. With mutual esteem for great services unselfishly rendered, with mutual confidence, they spoke their feelings in the dignified and studied language of the time. The world saw the incident and understood. Of all the scenes of that wonderful and providential time none has more significance at this hour than the sincere address of the First Bishop of the American Church to the First President of the American Republic.



Church of St. Peter

CHAPTER II

FIRST YEARS OF THE ORGANIZED CHURCH



Archbishop Carroll

AT this distance of time the character and the career of John Carroll bear the impress of the ideal. He filled his great and difficult position with a dignity and success equal to Washington's. In fact, the two men have a striking resemblance to each other both in character and career, and one of Dr. Carroll's portraits might easily be taken for a portrait of the Father of his Country. The bishop was a gentleman of the old school, cultured, travelled, scholarly; he had courage and tact beyond the average, and his sense of dignity was as much that of the aristocrat as of the cleric. It was his good fortune to be the pioneer, to begin all things ecclesiastical in most trying times, to build up the machinery of the Church in a new and even hostile environment. If, as some one has well said, the world reserves its big prizes for initiative, Dr. Carroll not only won but earned his prize of earthly immortality by courageous and faithful service. Born in the colony of Maryland of a good family, whose service to the Revolution and the State needs no laudation, John Carroll was educated in Europe at the college of St. Omer in Belgium, and joined the Jesuit community. During his stay on the continent he made the acquaintance of many distinguished members of the aristocracy and of the Church. The suppression of the Jesuits by Pope Clement

XIV, in 1773, left him in a straitened condition, and after some service in England he returned to his home in Maryland and took up the work of the mission. There were then in the whole country about a score of priests, without organization, barely governed by a prelate in distant London, somewhat harassed by their bigoted neighbors, yet doing brave and even brilliant service for the Church. Most of them were Maryland Jesuits, for whom the abolition of their Society was the crowning misfortune of a long series of troubles.

The experience and culture of Dr. Carroll, his connection with the famous Maryland family, his high connections abroad, his personal qualities, made him a notable man at that critical time, and it was not surprising that Congress should have invited him to accompany its delegates to Canada on the mission which John Jay helped to render useless. On this embassy he made the acquaintance and earned the esteem of Samuel Chase and Benjamin Franklin, so that Franklin could say, when the question of establishing a bishop in Maryland was brought before him by a papal nuncio in Paris, that he knew the very man for the position. Pius VI appointed Father Carroll the superior of the American mission by making him prefect-apostolic in the year 1784, and finished the work by making him Bishop of Baltimore, after the priests of the mission had unanimously chosen his name for presentation to the Pontiff. The Bulls were signed by Pius VI in Rome on the sixth of November, 1789, so that the Church in the American Republic began its career as an organization with the Republic itself, whose first President had taken his seat on March fourth of that year. Dr. Carroll had to go to England for consecration, though having his choice of Quebec and of Dublin. An invitation from an old friend, Thomas Weld of Lulworth Castle, to have the ceremony of consecration performed in his new chapel,

to enjoy his hospitality for the time he remained in England, and to renew old friendships, determined him for England.

On the journey over, a companion voyager was the Rev. Dr. Madison of Virginia, going to receive from an Anglican prelate consecration as the Protestant Bishop of Virginia. The two bishops returned home in the same ship some months later. While the ceremonies at Lulworth Chapel must have been, owing to popular feeling, somewhat subdued, yet the consecration of the American bishop, which took place on August 15, 1790, was celebrated with considerable splendor. Bishop Walmesly was the consecrator, a pontifical high mass was sung with the Catholic people and the friends of Mr. Weld as congregation, and the Rev. Charles Plowden preached the sermon. He alluded discreetly and feelingly to the loss of the colonies, but found consolation in the thought that the new empire of the West showed the working of Divine Providence in the fact that "the earliest and most precious fruit of it had been the extension of the kingdom of Christ, the propagation of the Catholic religion, which, heretofore fettered by restraining laws, is now enlarged from bondage, and is left at liberty to exert the full energy of divine truth." It is pleasant to see how little effect the colonial catastrophe had on the sound Catholic feeling of the pious hosts of the American bishop. On his departure, after pressing Dr. Carroll to remain longer, Mr. Weld wrote him in the elaborate style of the time: "I shall always esteem myself happy in every opportunity of giving you the smallest proof of my sincere respect and veneration. I was particularly so on the late occasion of your consecration. I shall look upon that day as one of the most memorable in my life, and as a glorious one to me and mine in many respects." Twenty years later the pallium was borne to Archbishop Carroll by the British Minister on his way to Washington. Napoleon ruled or

harassed the world at that date, the Pope was his prisoner in Savona, the administration of the Church had become a dangerous and unsettled affair, and so the minister of a Protestant power kindly bore the emblem of Catholic jurisdiction to an American prelate.

The task before Bishop Carroll, when he arrived home after a two months' voyage, in December of 1790, must have looked severe to the most courageous missionary. The mere labor might have been considered nothing, since a man can do no more than his powers permit, and when exhausted he falls; but the situation bristled with difficulties, mean, irritating, quite insurmountable. His jurisdiction included the United States of that period: all territory east of the Mississippi, south of the lakes and the St. Lawrence, north of Florida; later he was made administrator of Louisiana, and by the cession of Louisiana in 1803 his territory was doubled. All things had to be built up, churches, schools, convents, colleges, charities; priests had to be found, a system of finance introduced, and the legal relations of parishes with the community and the State determined in law and in precedent.

The mere travelling about his immense diocese was a problem in itself. While engaged in the ordinary work of a bishop he had to face and fight schism within, to defend himself and his faith and Church in the public prints, in the public courts, not only against the natural enemy, but against belligerent priests and self-sufficient laity. He had also to guard the newly organized Church from the interference of well-meaning meddlers abroad, who had undertaken to supply the American mission with bishops, and to instruct the officials in Rome on American conditions, without consulting Bishop Carroll or the real welfare of the Church. The public at large was not satisfied with the freedom of action secured to its old bugaboo of "Popery" by the Constitution, and

the bishop had to conciliate it, to explain unceasingly his attitude, to restrain his own clergy in order to keep peace with the suspicious and the prejudiced. How he continued his work and carried his career to an honorable and peaceful ending, it is not the province of this history to describe. Enough to say that he closed an administration of thirty years with such success and honor that his people and his country mourned him. His prudence, patience, moderation and firmness were far beyond the ordinary, and give him rank with the great man whom he so closely resembled — Washington. Before his death a great joy and a great cross came to him as the crowning of his labors: the Pope of the hour, Pius VII, relieved him of his great responsibility by establishing the dioceses of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown in 1808. John Carroll became Archbishop of Baltimore by this fact, and his diocese took the more reasonable scope provided by the States of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina and Georgia. His cross was the withdrawal of that confidence which Propaganda had shown in him for so many years, a misfortune due to the intriguers that hang about the great bureaus of nations, and also to the archbishop's lofty indifference to their intrigues. He died, aged eighty, on the second of December in the year 1815. His life reads like heroic romance, and both his career and his character indicate quite forcibly that some day he may receive the honors of the altar, honors reserved for heroic sanctity.

For nearly a quarter of a century, between the years 1784 and 1808, the city and territory of New York, with which this history has to deal, were under the jurisdiction of John Carroll, first as prefect-apostolic, and later as Bishop of Baltimore. So few were the Catholics in the State that at no time did they give him much trouble or labor. A remnant of the Six Nations still lingered in the region beyond the Mohawk and the Susquehanna, but it

was disappearing fast, as the Catholic Indians for the most part had found their way to Canada. In the city of New York hardly a trace remained of the Dongan period and the Catholics whom it had favored, of the Acadian tragedy, and of the Revolutionary period, when for a brief time the city was filled with French soldiers and officers.

The influence of John Jay was large enough to force into the State constitution, in 1777, a clause which required all persons seeking naturalization "to abjure and renounce all allegiance and subjection to all and every foreign king, prince, potentate and state, in all matters ecclesiastical and civil." On the statute-book there remained until repealed in 1784, the law of 1700 against "Popish Priests and Jesuits" found in the colony of New York, condemning them to perpetual imprisonment. John Jay remained the implacable enemy of the Catholics and their faith throughout his remarkable career as a jurist and diplomat until his death in 1829; and as he filled high positions at all times, legislator, ambassador to Spain, chief-justice, governor, and minister to England, it can be imagined how easily he harassed the unfortunate. The Federal constitution adopted in 1789 measurably destroyed his power to harm under the forms of law.

The first priest to minister to such Catholics as dared to assemble in the city for divine worship was the Jesuit, Rev. Ferdinand Farmer, who, from his mission in Lancaster, Penn., attended Catholics wherever they needed his services. Although of high attainments, and, as a mathematician, a correspondent of learned societies in Europe, his vocation was for the wild mission, rather than for the professorial chair. His superiors sent him to America where he labored with fidelity and fruit until his death in 1786, through New Jersey from the Delaware to Greenwood Lake, and through New York from the city as far north as Newburgh. It

was he who ministered to the Canadian and Acadian soldiers of the regiments known as Congress' Own, in their camps after the war. These brave men were in a dilemma at that time, having no homes in the Republic, and no place in their former countries. They were finally located on the banks of Lake Champlain, where Congress placed at their disposal enough land to secure them from want. Father Farmer gathered about him a small congregation in the city of New York, even before the Revolution had begun, and said mass for them in a regular chapel. The affair must have been conducted with great prudence and caution, in the face of the law which excluded priests from the colony, a law invoked by the British commander in 1776, when he sent Father de la Mothe to jail for saying mass in the city. The only record of the chapel's existence was found in the despatches of two French officials to their Government, in which it was stated that the chapel had been destroyed by fire. The supposition is that the fire occurred in the conflagration following Washington's evacuation of the city after the defeat on Long Island. When the war ended Father Farmer collected what was left of his congregation and said mass for them wherever it was convenient. Their exact number is not known, but the communicants were only eighteen, three of whom were Germans. Bishop Carroll, in his report to Propaganda on the condition of Catholics in 1785, gave fifteen hundred as resident in the State, and Father Farmer himself at the same date found only two hundred attending mass and the sacraments in the city.

Under the conditions of the period, religion could not generally have been in a flourishing state. Dr. Carroll himself says that "while there are few of our native Catholics who do not approach the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist at least once a year, especially in Easter time, you can scarcely find any among the new-comers who discharge this duty of religion, and there is

reason to fear that the example will be very pernicious, especially in commercial towns. The abuses that have grown up among Catholics are chiefly those which result from unavoidable intercourse with non-Catholics, and the examples thence derived : namely, more free intercourse between young people of opposite sexes than is compatible with chastity in mind and body ; too great fondness for dances and similar amusements ; and an incredible eagerness, especially in girls, for reading love stories which are brought over in great quantities from Europe.” This description makes clear how history repeats itself. In October of 1784, the Rev. Charles Whelan landed in New York to place his services at the disposal of the American mission. He was an Irishman, a Capucin monk, who had served as chaplain in the French navy under De Grasse, and who evidently appreciated the deserted condition of Catholics in the capital of the country. Father Farmer gladly turned over to him the New York congregation, when Dr. Carroll had given the new arrival the proper faculties. It would seem that Father Whelan began his work as chaplain to a distinguished Portuguese merchant in the city, probably Don José Ruiz Silva ; for he did not wait to receive from the prefect-apostolic his faculties before taking up the ministry.

His arrival occurred at a happy moment for him and his congregation. The government of the United States held its seat in New York, the foreign ministers resided there. At the meetings of Congress Catholic members came to live in town, and Catholic merchants from France and Spain and their American possessions were establishing offices. The great social lights of official life were the ministers of France and of Spain. They had their embassy chapels and chaplains, and their high rank and influence gave standing to the Catholics. Father Whelan did not seem to meet with success in organizing his parish. Father Farmer visited him

some time in the year after his arrival, and reported to their superior that the congregation was in a poor way, buried in difficulties, and displeased with the pastor. The two priests on one occasion heard forty confessions. "Scarce had I arrived there when an Irish merchant paid me a visit, and asked me if Mr. Whelan was settled over them. My answer, as far as I can remember, was that he had only power to perform parochial duties; but if the congregation did not like him and could better themselves, they were not obliged to keep him. Some days after, another, seeing Mr. Whelan's endeavors to settle himself there, as it were in spite of them, declared to me he had a mind to apply to the legislature for a law that no clergyman should be forced upon them, which he thought he could easily obtain. I endeavored to reconcile them by telling Mr. Whelan to make himself agreeable to his countrymen, and by telling these to be contented with what they had at present for fear of worse." Thus wrote Father Farmer to the Prefect, who in turn wrote to a friend that the Irish Capucin in New York was "a zealous, pious, and I think an humble man. He is not indeed so learned or so good a preacher as I could wish, which mortifies his congregation, as at New York and most other places in America, the different sectaries have scarce any other test to judge of a clergyman than his talents for preaching, and our Irish congregations, such as New York, follow the rule."

Father Whelan, however, in spite of his disadvantages, set about his work vigorously. He was joined in a short time by three other priests, whose history was quite as pungent as his own: Rev. William O'Connell, a chaplain of the Spanish embassy, a Dominican from Spain; Rev. Andrew Nugent, a Franciscan from Dublin; and Rev. Peter Huet de la Valiniere, a Sulpician from Montreal; all energetic, reputable, and singular priests. The Sulpician had been driven out of Canada because of his sympathy with the Revolution,

and returned there to die thirty years later. In the interval he travelled the American earth, ministering to the people and scheming great schemes for the spread of the gospel, but never remaining long enough anywhere to accomplish much. New York was at this moment his resting-place, where he served the French Catholics. For the people mass was said in the Vauxhall Garden, a place of public recreation facing the river between Warren and Chambers Street; but finding the place inconvenient, a notable layman of the time, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, consul-general of France, made application to the city authorities for the use of the Exchange, an unoccupied building on Broad Street. It was refused; he resented the refusal as an insult, and roused the Catholics of the city to action. As a consequence, they incorporated the parish under the laws of the State, with St. John, José Ruiz Silva, James Stewart, and Henry Duffin as trustees, bought five lots on Barclay Street, and converted a carpenter shop that stood thereon into a temporary church.

Evidently Hector St. John had spirit and energy, as became a Frenchman who had served with Montcalm. After the fall of French power he had become a farmer, and celebrated the charms of the life by writing a book called "The Letters of an American Farmer," which had great vogue in its day. Its point of view was curious, affecting the philosophy of the period, Voltairean of course, and rather looking down upon religion in general. For their indifference to religion he praised the Americans. However, this might have been a literary affectation with the consul-general of France whom misfortune had visited severely in his adventurous life. He set out for France in 1780, but was imprisoned by the British at New York; after getting away, he remained some years in France, and returned with the consulship at the close of the war. In the meantime his wife had died on the American farm, and the

Indians had burned his house and carried his three children into captivity; but they were recovered later in Boston, and he settled comfortably in New York. He died in France in 1813. With his advice and the aid of the trustees Father Whelan began the building of a church that was to be forty-eight by eighty feet in dimensions. The corner-stone was laid by the Spanish minister, Don Diego de Guardoqui, on October 5th, 1785, in the presence of a distinguished and numerous assembly, gathered out of compliment to the king of Spain. This monarch contributed one thousand dollars to the work, and out of compliment to him, Charles IV, the building was dedicated the following year on the feast of St. Charles Borromeo, the fourth of November, 1786.

Father Whelan by that time had ceased to be pastor. Rev. Andrew Nugent had arrived in New York about the time of the corner-stone ceremony, and offered his services to the happy pastor. They were accepted, and the preaching of the new-comer so charmed the congregation, that nothing would do but that the pastor should resign and Father Nugent take his place. Dr. Carroll came up to quiet the tumult which arose, yet when he had departed the partisans of Father Nugent at Christmas seized the collections, and by force and ill-treatment succeeded in frightening their pastor away. He resigned in February of 1786, went to visit a brother living some miles west of Albany, and finally transferred himself to the West. Owing to the wretched conditions, Dr. Carroll was compelled to recognize the usurper, or leave the Catholic people without a pastor. Rev. Andrew Nugent, if combative and selfish, did not lack energy, and had tact sufficient to get along with his friends. He succeeded in getting the church built, and opened it with solemn services in the presence of a very brilliant company. He himself sang the high mass, assisted by the chaplains of the French and Spanish embassies; the diplomatic corps and many

distinguished members of the Government were present; and after the dedication the Spanish ambassador entertained at his residence on Water Street, the entire Federal Government, the diplomats, the Governor of the State, and many eminent citizens.

In time, however, misfortune fell upon Father Nugent. He lost the esteem of his congregation, who presented a list of charges against him to Dr. Carroll, a list so long that the prefect came to New York in October of 1787, withdrew the faculties of Father Nugent, deposed him from St. Peter's, and appointed Rev. William O'Brien of Philadelphia pastor in his place. Great scandal followed. Father Nugent held the church and compelled his superior to say mass in the chapel of the Spanish embassy, and left only when the trustees ejected him by process of law. The trustees were an acrimonious but determined set of men, full of new ideas on church government, and resolute to control church affairs in spite of bishop and priest, and the canon law behind them. They awed the pugnacious Father Nugent into perfect quiet, for he is not heard of again in the parish history until his friends got up a subscription to send him back to Europe in the bark *Telemaque*, some date in 1790. His successor, Rev. William O'Brien, was a capable and pious priest, who carried on for the next two decades the business of the parish without any friction. At least we hear of none in the records of the time. An old schoolmate of his in Spain had recently become the Archbishop of Mexico, and the devoted priest undertook the long and trying voyage to that city for the purpose of securing what funds were needed to put his church in a respectable condition. He returned after an absence of several months with nearly five thousand dollars collected in Mexico, one thousand dollars received from the diocese of Puebla de los Angeles, and several handsome paintings for the adornment of his church. With

these funds he was enabled to place pews, erect the tower, and build the portico, a work completed by the year 1794.

The plague of yellow fever was for many years a regular visitor in New York, and in the years 1795 and 1798 it was particularly severe, three thousand deaths occurring in the latter year, of which nearly one hundred fell to the share of Father O'Brien. His devotion to the plague-stricken won for him general praise. In his efforts on their behalf he was greatly aided by a Catholic negro, the slave of a lady from St. Domingo, Madame Berard. This Pierre Toussaint was then a man of about thirty, and was actually supporting his poverty-stricken mistress. The Berard family had been driven out of St. Domingo by the revolution, the father had died on a return trip to the island to recover some of his property, and his widow was left penniless in New York. Her slave supported her by his wages as a ladies' hair-dresser, and even after her marriage to one Monsieur Nicholas, reduced by the same misfortune from affluence to the position of violinist in an orchestra, continued his aid.

Toussaint found time for a display of the most exalted charity; at one time taking charge of a priest just landed, penniless and suffering from typhoid, and nursing him until cured; at another, performing the same charity for a poor woman attacked by yellow fever; and always busy during a long life soliciting alms for charitable purposes. His business talent enabled him to acquire some means, his mistress gave him his freedom at her death, in the course of time his wife and children preceded him to the grave, and he devoted his leisure and his income to works of charity. When he died at the age of eighty-seven, in 1853, Father Quinn of St. Peter's preached his panegyric at a funeral beautifully described by a Protestant lady in a letter to a friend. "I went to town on Saturday to attend Toussaint's funeral. High mass, incense, candles,

rich robes, sad and solemn music, were there. The Church gave all it could give to prince or noble. The priest, his friend Mr. Quinn, made a most interesting address. He did not allude to his color and scarcely to his station; it seemed as if his virtues as a man and a Christian had absorbed all other thoughts. A stranger would not have suspected that a black man of his humble calling lay in the midst of us. He said no relative was left to mourn for him, yet many present would feel that they had lost one who always had wise counsel for the rich, words of encouragement for the poor, and all would be grateful for having known him. . . . The aid he had given to the late Bishop Fenwick of Boston, to Father Powers of our city, to all the Catholic institutions, was dwelt upon at large. How much I have learned of his charitable deeds which I had never known before! Mr. Quinn said: "There were few left among the clergy, superior to him in devotion and zeal for the Church and for the glory of God; among laymen, none." Another Protestant lady printed the story of his life, and the Boston abolitionists held him up as an example of virtue and intelligence.

The Catholic population was steadily increasing in the city, and extending northward into the State. Yet the finances were still precarious. In 1800 the debt was nearly seven thousand dollars, the annual income fifteen hundred, and the expenses fourteen. Father O'Brien had the courage to build a school, however, which soon had in charge five hundred pupils; he also invited his brother Matthew, from Ireland, to act as his assistant, and he took charge of a new congregation just founded at Albany. Father Matthew was a man of learning, an author, and a fine preacher, so that the congregation at last secured their ideal of a priest, a pulpit orator. The very handsome allowance voted Father Matthew by the Albany Catholics, one thousand dollars a year, enabled him to indulge in such luxuries as a parish school and an assistant, a steeple for the

church, and an organ for the choir. For nearly two years he made regular visits up the Hudson to the Catholics at Albany. Rev. Charles Whelan had looked after them for a few years after his departure from New York, while staying with his brother at Johnstown. Then a Rev. Father Flinn for a time ministered to seventy families at Fort Stanwix on the Mohawk, and Father Matignon of Boston wrote that there were four hundred Catholic families between that place and Albany. Some of them were people of means and rank, Count De la Tour de Pin and his wife, French exiles, for example. The countess was daughter to the famous Count Dillon, an officer under Rochambeau in the Revolution, who perished by the guillotine of the Terror. The congregation was organized under the leadership of Thomas Barry and Louis Le Couteulx in 1797, and in the next year they built a church, described by the journals of the city as "neat, an ornament of the city, and a blessing to its builders."

The main difficulty was to secure a priest. The Catholics desired a fine preacher in order to impress properly the distinguished people who frequented at all times the capital city. Father Whelan could not have pleased them, Father Matthew O'Brien did not remain long with them; they asked Bishop Carroll for one Father Stafford, but no record of him is to be found; Dr. Cornelius Mahony had charge around 1802, (and so displeased his people that they charged him before the bishop with harsh and arbitrary conduct;) next, Rev. Luke Fitzsimmons, a Recollet from Montreal, failed to please them as a preacher; later, Rev. John Bryne won their good graces but had to go elsewhere after a few months; and finally, Rev. James Bushe took charge of the parish and died in it, 1808. It was only upon the arrival of a resident bishop in New York that Albany received necessary and proper attention. Life went on quite smoothly until the eventful year of 1808. Great

and singular events were taking place in the world. Matthew Carey of Philadelphia published in 1790 the first quarto edition of the Bible ever printed in America, and it was also the first Catholic edition of the Bible in English. The same enterprising Irishman had also given the public a magazine called the *American Museum*. In New York it was not until 1808 that Pastorini's history of the Church was printed. The Federal government had departed from New York in 1800, and located in the city of Washington with its population of less than 15,000 scattered about the marshes. In 1791 Bishop Carroll held his first synod and enacted the proper laws for the better government of his vast diocese. Washington died at Mount Vernon, and while Rev. Matthew O'Brien preached his panegyric in the Albany church before a distinguished audience, Bishop Carroll did the same in his pro-cathedral at Baltimore. The Catholics had every reason to be grateful to the wonderful man whose genius had shed its beneficent light on them, and had done so much to lift them out of colonial misery. The utterances of the clergy at the time prove that they fully appreciated his services.

Napoleon, in the height of his power, was giving the Pope as much trouble as an emperor could, and hampering ecclesiastical affairs for America or helping them, as his whims demanded, without knowing of his own interference. Exiled priests and nobles were finding their way to America, and schemes of all sorts were hatching. Their nature can be better understood from a single incident which occurred in 1790 within the limits of the State of New York. The Oneida Indians had with them in that year a Catholic priest, who had been recommended to them by a trader named Peter Penet, possessing great influence among them, as the supposed representative of the king of France. Penet seems to have been an unscrupulous character, and kept his hand carefully

concealed in this transaction. The papal nuncio at Paris received in the year 1790 a petition from the Oneida Indians to Pope Pius VI, asking for a bishop at Oneida; it was signed by the chiefs of the tribe and asked the Pope to name as bishop the Rev. John Louis Victor Le Tonnelier de Coulonges, their pastor. The petition was forwarded to the Pope; no one knew Penet the agent, or the priest named for bishop; and the scheme was never heard of again. The new world offered a great field for adventure, and the adventurers did not disdain even these methods.

In 1805 Rev. Matthew O'Brien received into the Church one of the most distinguished women of her time, Mrs. Elisabeth Bayley Seton, who afterwards became the foundress of the Sisters of Charity in this country. She was a member of a famous family and the widow of a merchant named William Seton. Accompanying her husband to Italy for his health, where he died, she became acquainted with two brothers, merchants of Leghorn, Philip and Anthony Filicchi. Their friendship not only carried her through the difficulties of her position, but led her into the true Church. In St. Peter's she made her confession of faith, her first communion, and her confirmation in the spring of 1805, to the consternation of the country. A few years later she adopted the religious life, received as members of the community her two sisters-in-law, the Misses Seton, and later two of her daughters, and after a holy and useful life died at an early age in 1821. Another eminent woman of the time was the English actress, Mrs. Charlotte Milmoth, who made her first appearance on November 20, 1793, in the John Street Theatre, as Euphrasia in Murphy's tragedy of "The Grecian Daughter." No doubt the great Washington himself saw her act. She was a woman of the highest reputation, and when age compelled her to retire from the stage in 1812 she opened a school in Brooklyn, and had among her

pupils the late Cardinal McCloskey in his boyhood. She was buried in St. Patrick's churchyard in 1823.

For some years Bishop Carroll had been urging upon the Pope the division of his immense diocese, and had recommended that new sees be made at Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Bardstown in Kentucky. After full discussion of the matter his appeal was heard, and he was asked to name the candidates. For Boston he sent the name of Rev. John Cheverus, the priest in charge of that city; for Philadelphia the name of Rev. Michael Egan, a holy Franciscan; and for Bardstown the name of Rev. Benedict J. Flaget, a missionary of the West. For some reason he had no candidate for New York. His nominations were all ratified by the Pope, and by a bull issued on April 8, 1808, the four new dioceses were erected and their boundaries named. Rev. Luke Concanen, Dominican monk, was named by the Pope, on recommendation of the Archbishop of Dublin, the first bishop of New York. On that date the new diocese, whose history is to be set forth in this book, began its legal existence.



Old St. Patrick's

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST BISHOP OF NEW YORK



Mrs. Elisabeth Seton

BISHOP CONCANEN was an Irishman who had spent most of his life in Rome, and had attained eminence as a scholar and administrator. Twice had he been named for Irish sees, but had declined the honors on account of his health, which did not thrive in the Irish climate; and he accepted the New York see only on the supposition that its climate would agree with him. He was then approaching seventy. For some time he had been in cor-

respondence with American priests and Bishop Carroll, and had received a good impression of the American country. It was altogether wrong, as the old prelate would have learned to his cost had he succeeded in reaching the United States, and as his successor learned some years later. Shortly after his appointment he fell ill to the point of death, and lost his desire for the arduous enterprise, but the authorities insisted on his acceptance when he had recovered, and so he was consecrated by Cardinal di Pietro on April 24, 1808. He made extensive preparations for his voyage, securing from his numerous friends donations of money, plate, vestments, books and whatever would be useful in a missionary country. The pallium for Archbishop Carroll and the bulls erecting the new bishoprics, with other important documents, were confided to him and in June he arrived in Leghorn, where he was to take ship for New York. Here he learned that

all American vessels had been sequestered by the French authorities, and he himself was regarded with suspicion as a British subject, France and England being then at war. Four months of waiting convinced him that there was no reaching America at that time. He left his baggage with the Filicchi brothers, also the bulls and documents, with instructions to send them on to Dr. Carroll at the earliest opportunity. He himself returned to Rome and resumed his former life of activity. The Pope allowed him a pension, he continued to act as agent for foreign bishops, and when Napoleon sent the whole papal court into exile he made himself useful in Rome performing episcopal functions.

He empowered Dr. Carroll to appoint an administrator for New York, as the date of his arrival had now become quite uncertain, and he wrote to the Baltimore prelate in August of 1809 a pathetic account of his worries: "After the series of trials and disappointments that I have experienced ever since my unfortunate appointment to the see of New York, the greatest consolation I felt was that of receiving Your Grace's inestimable letter of 20 Jan. last. The pleasure and approbation you so kindly express at my promotion, the satisfaction shown on that occasion by our beloved Catholics of New York, and the pleasing account you give of the present state of the Church, are to me objects of the highest estimation. I have ever had a sensible predilection for the Americans, and a desire (which obedience only rendered ineffectual) of serving in that mission; but never indeed had I the ambition of appearing there in quality of a bishop, especially in my advanced age and weakened by my late infirmities. Now that I am bound to undertake the arduous charge, you may imagine what concern and affliction it gives me to be sequestered here so long, spectator of tragic scenes, which cannot be unknown to you,

and wasting that remnant of my life which ought to be employed in the service of my beloved flock." Through the influence of friends of Bishop Flaget, who was then in France, Cardinal Fesch was interested in his case, and the uncle of Napoleon secured for Bishop Concanen a passport to leave for America from a French port; but the old man feared the effect of a long journey into France, and declined the favor. In the spring of 1810 he succeeded in getting a passport from General Miollis, Napoleon's governor of Rome, and a berth in the ship *Frances of Salem*, Captain Haskell, through kind offices of the American consul at Naples and the Filicchi brothers. All seemed fair at last, and the ship was to sail on Sunday, June 17.

At the last moment the difficulties began. Captain Haskell would not allow his companion priests aboard, young men who had volunteered for the American mission; the bishop had to go unattended, a hardship which he accepted bravely. The police then professed to be dissatisfied with his passport, and ordered him not to attempt to embark until his papers were in satisfactory condition. His ship sailed without him, and the old bishop surrendered himself to bitterness. He said to a priest: "I may bid farewell to America forever. I pray you, my dear abbé, to see that whatever regards my funeral and burial be done in a decent manner, so as not to disgrace my rank and character." No one had any thought of his death, but a prostration and fever seized him that night, he received the last sacraments the next day, and died on the nineteenth. His obsequies took place the next day in the church of San Domenico Maggiore, and his body was placed in the vaults of the church. The police took charge of his valuable effects, most of them never reaching his friends and heirs. The priest who attended him in his last moments, in his letter to the Dominican superior, giving an account of the death and obsequies,

Right Reverend Luke Concanen
1808-1810



says nothing about this outrage, except to imply that he apprehended difficulty in getting at the effects of the bishop.

The portrait of the first bishop of New York shows a distinguished and cultured face, handsome even in age, well balanced, and amiable. Perhaps it was as well for Bishop Concanen that he died from disappointment in Naples, among his own, for he surely would have died from another disappointment on arriving in New York; where conditions were so utterly different from what he imagined, that the journey into France, which he feared, would have seemed a pleasant recreation compared with the journeys to be made in New York State at that early day; such journeys as Dr. Carroll had to make week after week for thirty years. He would have found the see bare of episcopal necessities, of priests, of churches, an increasing population neglected and neglectful, and no apparent means of bettering conditions. His successor encountered such a situation.

Some years were to elapse before that successor could be appointed, owing to the imprisonment of the Pope and the overthrow of the papal government by Napoleon. In the meantime Bishop Carroll appointed Rev. Anthony Kohlmann, a Jesuit of ability and worth, to act as administrator of the diocese until Bishop Concanen arrived. Accompanied by another Jesuit, Rev. Benedict Fenwick, a native of Baltimore, he took possession of his charge towards the close of 1808. Father William O'Brien had lost health and mind, though he remained in the parish for many years; his brother, Matthew, was transferred to Philadelphia. Both these estimable men lived until 1816, and died in the same year. The two Jesuits were young men, energetic and earnest; Father Kohlmann about forty and his companion not yet thirty; and they brought to their work the spirit of the true missionary. The number of Catholics was estimated anywhere from

ten to fifteen thousand in the city, mostly Irish, a few Spaniards, a large number of Germans and some Frenchmen. Confessions were not in proportion to the numbers, however, and in order to rouse the proper interest in religious duties, sermons in English, French and German were given every Sunday, three catechism classes were established, pious societies were formed, and converts were encouraged. In due time this earnest work produced its fruit, the church filled up at all services, and the confessionals were overcrowded. In fact it became evident that another parish would soon have to be erected and a church built to accommodate the numbers. The Germans of the city had already, in March of the year 1808, sent a petition to Bishop Carroll for a German pastor. It gives a glimpse of the times:

“To the Right Reverend Father in God: We, the undersigned, for ourselves and a considerable number of our German brethren who are all educated in the Catholic faith, approach your Reverence and pray you to allow and to send us a pastor who is capable of undertaking the spiritual Care of our Souls in the German Language, which is our Mother Tongue. Many of us do not know any English at all, and Those who have some knowledge of it are not well enough versed in the English Language to attend Divine Service with any utility to themselves. As we have not yet a place of worship of our own, we have made application to the Trustees of the English Catholic Church in this City to grant us permission to perform our worship in the German Language in their church at such times as not to interfere with their regular services. This permission they have very readily granted us. During the course of this year we shall take care to find an opportunity to provide ourselves with a Suitable building of our own, for we have no doubt that our number will soon considerably increase. We leave it entirely to your Reverence to choose for

us a Man, who is capable of taking upon Him our spiritual Concerns, and instruct us in our holy religion, and we humbly beg to Grant our Prayers as soon as it is possible for your Reverence. In our religion the diversity of Language makes indeed no difference but from the reasons alleged your Reverence will deign to perceive that it is of consequence to our Repose that we perform our worship in the Language we best understand. We shall take care to provide for our pastor as far as our abilities go, if your Reverence will deign to listen to this our Earnest prayer. We humbly beg to direct the answer to Mr. Francis Werneken, No. 32, corner of Warren and Church street in New York. For this great favour we shall feel ourselves forever gratefull to Your Reverence and beg leave to subscribe ourselves with the greatest Respect

“Your Reverence’s Most humble and obedient servants.”

This appeal Bishop Carroll probably heeded in his appointment of Father Kohlmann, who was a German. The German Catholics were quite numerous throughout Pennsylvania and Maryland, and in selecting a coadjutor he had chosen a German Jesuit, a learned and accomplished man, Rev. Lawrence Graessel, for the position. The coadjutor died, however, before his bulls arrived, in caring for plague-stricken people. Two of the bishop’s vicar-generals were German; but Dr. Carroll himself had no love for the division of parishes on race lines, and he had protested to Rome when the Germans of Philadelphia withdrew from St. Joseph’s to set up a distinctively German parish. His protest was not heeded, and within a few years the German priests had started a schism which gave no end of trouble. The petitioners of New York were evidently acquainted with the facts, and their petition was drawn up with great respect and mildness. Thus early the race problem with its jealousies and frenzies invaded the Church

in America. In satisfying the Germans by naming a German pastor for New York, Dr. Carroll offended Bishop Concanen, it would seem, and innocently paved the way for his own disfavor in Rome. However, the people were satisfied with the two good priests, who labored for them with such good effect. Father Kohlmann persuaded the trustees, and they needed persuasion, to take up the scheme of a new church for the people.

On the outskirts of the city and so very close to the wilderness that foxes were frequent visitors, a plot of ground was bought between Broadway and the Bowery Road, where now stands old St. Patrick's. Here on the 8th of June, 1809, the pastor laid the cornerstone of the cathedral. It was on a Thursday afternoon, and three thousand people assembled to witness the ceremony; a procession made up of the clergy, the choir, the honorable trustees, and distinguished parishioners marched to the spot; and the new church at the suggestion of Archbishop Carroll was named St. Patrick's. Public interest was attracted evidently to Catholic doings, although the ambassadors of France and Spain were no longer present at Church ceremonies, the embassies having removed to Washington. A year later, when the news of Bishop Concanen's death arrived and solemn services were held in St. Peter's, Father Kohlmann wrote an account of the ceremony to the Archbishop. "The sanctuary, the whole altar, all the curtains, were in black. The bier was elegantly fixed, covered and surrounded by all the badges of the episcopal dignity, such as the mitre, crosier, etc.; a high mass with deacon and sub-deacon, accompanied with musical instruments, celebrated, and a funeral sermon on the episcopal dignity delivered by Rev. Mr. Fenwick to an audience so numerous as has scarce ever been seen before in any church."

The next step in behalf of the parish was the establishment of a classical college, and the New York Literary Institute was opened

in charge of the Jesuits in 1809. The first location seems to have been in the neighborhood of Barclay Street, but in the course of time the Institute occupied a handsome building all its own in the present Fiftieth Street on the site of the grand cathedral. Four talented scholastics formed the teaching staff, and Father Fenwick directed its affairs. From the very start it rejoiced in no less a number of pupils than fifty, among them the children of Protestants like Governor Tompkins; and had circumstances permitted its founders to continue their good work, undoubtedly it would have been the foundation of a great college. However, it lasted only four years, and in 1813 the Jesuits transferred it to a body of Trappist monks, whom the chances of the times had driven to New York. Napoleon had closed the houses of the Trappist community in his empire, and the members had scattered into various parts. One body under the leadership of the Superior-General, Dom Augustine, found a refuge in the United States, wandering about from place to place until they finally secured the Literary Institute. Here they opened an orphanage in which thirty children found shelter and training, and the priests of the community lent their aid in ministering to the Catholics of the city and vicinity. Not far off from their establishment was the convent of an Ursuline community on Fiftieth Street near Third Avenue, whose members had come from the Blackrock convent at Cork to work in the diocese, on the invitation of Father Kohlmann. They arrived in the year 1812 in charge of two Irish priests, opened at once an academy and a free school, and were incorporated by a special act of the legislature in 1814. The conditions of their stay demanded that within three years a sufficient number of novices should have joined them to warrant their continuance, otherwise they were to return to Ireland. From Mr. Stephen Jumel they bought a house and some land for the sum of three thousand dollars, and with a

full school and the spiritual services of the Trappist Fathers they found themselves most happily situated.

Father Kohlmann must have taken great pride in the condition of his diocese at this period; for he had two fine parish schools going, an academy, an orphan asylum, a well-organized parish at St. Peter's where all was in perfect order, the cathedral building, and four priests carrying on the work of the parish, Fathers Fenwick, Malou, Wouters, and his brother Paul Kohlmann. The Catholics were increasing rapidly in the diocese. Over in New Jersey, at a place called Macoupin, was a faithful German colony of iron-workers to whom a priest went at regular intervals; along the Hudson were little groups of Catholic emigrants whom a priest visited when possible on the ride up to Albany; the people of the capital were looked after by the casual priest whose stay was rarely long; on Lake Champlain, Father De la Valiniere, the expatriated Sulpician, ministered to the Acadian and Canadian refugees; the Indians at St. Regis on the St. Lawrence were attended by a Father Roupe from Montreal; and the scattered Catholics throughout the State were found occasionally by the travelling priest, had their children baptized and their marriages blessed, and thus kept the faith alive until the day of general organization came.

The relation of the Catholics to their Protestant fellow-citizens at that early time has been fairly illustrated by important incidents. As a whole the Protestants acted with great consideration, and the leaders in particular seemed to have lost through intercourse with the Spanish and French diplomats, through gratitude to Spain and France for timely aid, and by acquaintance with eminent merchants like Dominick Lynch, José Silva, and Hector St. John, the old-fashioned distrust of all things Catholic. Thomas Paine was dying in New York about that time, and for some reason he invited Father Fenwick to call upon him. In the high-colored account of this

interesting affair given by Mr. De Courcy in his history of the early times in the American Church, Paine is said to have been induced by a Catholic convert to send for the priest in the hope of a miraculous cure for his infirmity. The famous freethinker was then living in Greenwich village at the age of threescore and ten. Whatever his motives in sending for the priest, the visit had no result. Father Fenwick brought his superior along with him on the visit, and the two priests promptly opened up the subject of the eternal life and the salvation of his soul. This angered Paine. Father Fenwick says in a letter : "Paine was roused into a fury, he gritted his teeth, twisted and turned himself several times in his bed, uttering all the while the bitterest imprecations. I firmly believe, such was the rage in which he was at the time, that if he had had a pistol he would have shot one of us ; for he conducted himself more like a madman than a rational creature. Begone, says he, and trouble me no more. I was in peace, he continued, till you came. Away with you and your God, too ; leave the room instantly ; all that you have uttered are lies, filthy lies ; and if I had a little more time I would prove it, as I did about your impostor Jesus Christ. Let us go, said I then to Father Kohlmann, we have nothing more to do here ; he seems to be entirely abandoned by God." One may imagine the terror of the young priest at facing the most famous atheist of his day, for the fame of his career and his writings and his general wickedness impressed the people of that period with the deepest horror and disgust. Thomas Paine died in Greenwich village a short time after the visit ; and since then the dimensions of his fame have so diminished, and his kind have so multiplied, that his history excites no emotion whatever to-day.

Father Kohlmann became at one time the centre of a legal and doctrinal controversy which held public interest for some months,

and threatened serious results before it ended. A Catholic merchant named James Keating caused the arrest, in March of the year 1813, of one Philips and his wife on a charge of receiving goods stolen from him by some colored thieves ; but before the trial came on he withdrew his charge and asked that the case be dismissed as he had recovered the stolen property. This statement brought out the fact that Father Kohlmann had restored it, and the priest was immediately summoned before the court to explain how it came into his hands. Of course he refused to comply with the demand of the court on the ground that knowledge of the thieves had come to him through the confessional, and no court had a right to demand evidence of a priest in such a matter. The case went to the grand jury, Father Kohlmann was called before it to testify, and again declined on the same ground. When Philips and his wife were brought up for trial, the priest was summoned for the third time as a witness for the prosecution, and a third time he refused to answer questions, giving at large his reasons and setting forth the doctrine of the Church in the case. With the consent of the counsel the case was put off for some time, until the point raised could be more carefully examined.

In the meantime public attention had been attracted, a great crowd attended court and heard the priest's explanations of his position, several ministers raised a hue and cry over his conduct, and signs of religious dissension began to multiply. The district-attorney, Mr. Gardinier, a rather fair-minded man, concluded that it would be as well to enter a *nolle prosequi* and let the matter drop rather than excite the fanatics ; but the trustees of St. Peter's thought the moment favorable for the settlement of a question which was sure to come up again, and urged that the point be finally determined. Father Kohlmann, himself, in his address to the court, stated the point at issue very clearly. Said he : "The

question now before the court is this : whether a Roman Catholic priest can in any case be justified in revealing the secrets of sacramental confession ? I say he cannot." The point was argued on June 8th, 1813, before a court composed of Mayor De Witt Clinton, Recorder Josiah Ogden Hoffman, and Aldermen Isaac S. Douglas and Richard Cunningham. Mr. Gardinier, for the State, held that the immunity claimed by the priest was not recognized by the law of the State ; Messrs. Riker and Sampson, for the defendant, admitted his contention and reviewed the English statutes which denied to a priest a similar immunity ; but they showed that under the State constitution every principle of any religious denomination was protected, provided it did not lead to disorder ; and they urged the broad protection of the Constitution as a sufficient and ample reason in behalf of the priest's contention.

The decision of the court was rendered on June 14, and the court was unanimous. It accepted Father Kohlmann's statement of the laws of the Church and of the odium a violation of the seal of confession would bring upon him. "The witness in this case evidently believes that his answering in this case would expose him to punishment in a future state, and it must be conceded by all that it would expose him to privations and disgrace in this world. If he tells the truth, he violates his ecclesiastical oath ; if he prevaricates, he violates his judicial oath. The only course for the Court is to declare that he shall not testify or act at all." De Witt Clinton rendered the decision in these words. Elsewhere he said : "We speak of this question not in a theological sense, but in its legal and constitutional bearings. Although we differ from the witness and his brethren in our religious creed, yet we have no reason to question the purity of their motives, or to impeach their good conduct as citizens. They are protected by the laws and constitution of this country in the full and free exercise of their religion, and this court

can never countenance or authorize the application of insult to their faith, or of torture to their consciences."

The case created a great sensation at the time, and roused a few ministers to warm discussion. Mr. Sampson published a report of the case, and Father Kohlmann an elaborate treatise, in which he explained the entire doctrine of the Church on the sacrament of penance, taking advantage of the popular interest in the trial to insinuate some information about the Church. Many replies went out from Protestant pens, and the strongest came from the Rev. Charles Wharton, the Episcopal minister of Burlington, New Jersey. He was a near relative of Archbishop Carroll, had been born a Catholic in Maryland, had studied and been ordained a priest in England, and after twenty years' service on the English mission had returned in 1783 to his native land and announced himself a Protestant. He lived to the age of eighty-three, was twice married, and published several books. A curious story is told of him, that his Catholic servant was dying, no priest could be found to give her the last sacraments, he explained to her his former character, and actually heard her confession and gave her absolution. It was said that at his own death he sent for a priest, but died before the priest arrived. His reply to Father Kohlmann's book was able, sufficiently at least to draw a response from a priest of Charleston, Rev. Dr. O'Gallagher, a native of Dublin. Long after the controversy had died out De Witt Clinton gave the whole affair a safe settlement; for in 1826 the legislature passed a law declaring that "no minister of the Gospel, or priest of any denomination whatsoever, shall be allowed to disclose any confessions made to him in his professional character, in the course of discipline enjoined by the rules or practice of such denomination."

This decision of the Court of Sessions gave great pleasure to the Catholics, not only for itself, but also because it showed the kindly

spirit of the leaders of the State, and proved how really beneficent was the American constitution in religious affairs. The year 1814 must have seemed a bright one for Father Kohlmann who had now administered the diocese for six years with increasing success. Yet it really turned out a year of misfortunes. The Trappist monks by the fall of Napoleon found France open to them once more, and sailed away in a body, monks, nuns, and orphans; then the Ursulines found, as their three years' limit drew to a close, that they had received no novices and not enough money to pay their house mortgage, and in the spring of 1815 they returned to Ireland; and last of all, his superiors ordered Father Kohlmann to retire to Maryland, as the Pope, returned from exile, had chosen a bishop for New York. The good priest turned over his affairs to Father Fenwick and withdrew to Maryland, serving his order there and in Europe most faithfully until his death in the year 1829. He might there have met the French historian of the Jesuit society, M. Cretineau-Joly, and given him a vivid description of the sensational trial touching the secrecy of the confessional; for the historian has treated it at some length in one of his books, and supposing the question to have been crucial for the Catholics of the United States, a matter of life and death, he made a most picturesque but inaccurate chapter out of the dramatic moment. While there was much talk and considerable feeling among the bigots, the leaders of the time, De Witt Clinton and the members of the court, the lawyers on both sides, all dealt with the question in the judicial spirit, settled it fairly and amicably, removed it finally from the arena of controversy by act of the legislature, and were supported from first to last by the good sense of the American community.

Father Fenwick took charge of New York upon the departure of his superior, and made haste to get the cathedral finished in time for the expected bishop whose name had not yet reached him.

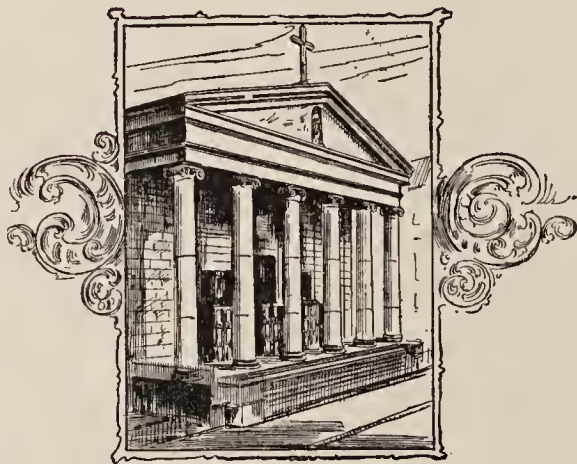
The building had been delayed for lack of means, and was still in poor condition ; nevertheless in its unfinished state it compared favorably with the churches of the time. Bishop Plessis of Quebec visited the city in the year 1815, to be really impressed by the structure. He wrote: "It has already cost ninety thousand dollars, but has yet no steeple, or sacristy, or enclosure, or annexed buildings. Outside there is no rough-casting or pencilled joints, although the very ordinary stone of which it is built requires both. To make up for this the interior is magnificent. Six tall clustered columns on each side, dividing the whole body of the church into three naves, surmounted by gothic arches, form a sight all the more imposing, as a painter has designed, on the flat rear wall terminating the edifice behind the altar, a continuation of these arches and columns, that form a distant perspective and produce a vivid illusion on strangers not warned in advance, giving them at first the impression that the altar stands midway in the length of the church, when in reality it touches the wall. The effect produced by this perspective makes this church pass for the finest in the United States. It is also remarkable for the size of the windows, the elegance of the two galleries one above the other, symmetrical staircases leading to the organ over the main entrance. The pews occupying the nave leave three spacious aisles, and are capped all around with mahogany. It is intended to be the bishop's cathedral, but the sanctuary is not at all adapted for placing his throne, or for the performance of episcopal functions." The church was ready for dedication on Ascension Day, May 4, 1815, and Bishop Cheverus came down from Boston to perform the ceremony. Although the Pope had appointed a bishop for New York, who had been consecrated and was even then on his way to his see, no news of the appointment had reached the clergy, so slowly did news travel in those days.

As usual the ceremony of dedication engaged the attention of the whole town; the mayor, the board of aldermen, and the honorable trustees led the procession into the church, the bishop in full canonicals, surrounded by his assistants and preceded by the altar-boys, fetching up the rear. Five priests were present, Fathers Fenwick, Malou, Carbry, Maleve and Pasquiet, a great crowd filled the cathedral, and Father Fenwick preached the sermon. Bishop Cheverus wrote to Archbishop Carroll that he had done everything according to the most solemn rites of the Church, and that everybody was pleased.

He remained in the city for several weeks, confirming and transacting other necessary business at the request of Father Fenwick; and during his stay came the news that John Connolly, a Dominican, the prior of St. Clement's in Rome, had been consecrated bishop of New York, and might be expected any moment. The fact that the consecration had taken place in the preceding November, the somewhat strained relations between Dr. Carroll and Propaganda, and the surprise that a British subject should have been chosen bishop at a time when England and the United States were at war, all helped to give Bishop Cheverus and the clergy a feeling of consternation—a feeling which explains the good bishop's letters of apology at having accepted the invitation to dedicate the cathedral. But as the new bishop did not arrive in his see until the fall of 1815, and then found all things prepared for him as neatly as the circumstances permitted, no harm resulted.

The seven years of Jesuit administration of the parish had passed off with safety, if not brilliancy; difficulties had been smoothed over, and the trustees evidently kept in good humor, as they do not seem to have taken a high hand with their pastors; the cathedral had been built by their persuasion with the trustees; and the spirit of piety had been roused among the people. Kindly

relations had been kept up with Protestant neighbors, as can be seen in the circumstances attending the trial of Father Kohlmann; not a few converts had been received into the church; and although the social grandeur of the Catholics had disappeared with the removal of the Spanish and French embassies to Washington, still the Catholic body retained sufficient standing to receive such honors as the presence of the mayor and the board of aldermen at the dedication of St. Patrick's cathedral. Catholic laymen were prominent in business and politics. Mr. Andrew Morris, who bought the land for the site of the cathedral, was a member of the legislature; Dominick Lynch, whose mansion on the Sound at Claason's Point is today part of the Christian Brothers' Academy, was a wealthy merchant and great landholder in the State; and there were some scores of merchants in the town whose influence was of moment in those early times; French, Spanish, German, and Irish, who lived together in decent and neighborly affection, bound by the ties of interest as well as of the faith.



Second Church of St. Peter

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMINISTRATION OF BISHOP CONNOLLY



Bishop Fenwick

WHEN Bishop Concanen lay ill in Rome before his consecration, and it seemed that his recovery was unlikely, the authorities informed his brother Dominican, Rev. John Connolly, that his nomination to the see of New York was certain. After the death of Bishop Concanen Father Connolly succeeded to his position as prior of St. Clement's, and in the year 1814, after the return of Pope Pius VII from exile, he was made Bishop of New York, and consecrated on the sixth of November. A more imprudent appointment at that time could hardly have been made, for England and the United States were at war. As a British subject, Bishop Connolly was hardly *persona grata*, and as a matter of fact he had to delay his departure for New York until peace had been declared. Archbishop Carroll had refused to name a candidate for the diocese of New York, and for some reason always entertained apprehensions about it, whether from the bad spirit of the church trustees or from the great unlikeness to conditions in Maryland, is not easy to say. He had frequently urged caution on Propaganda in the choice of a bishop, and had even recommended Rev. Ambrose Marêchal of his own diocese as a safe successor to Bishop Concanen, but his favor at Rome had declined. Archbishop Troy of Dublin had practically taken his place as adviser to Rome on

American affairs, jealousy of some sort had crept in, and misunderstandings had begun to abound.)

Bishop Connolly left Rome immediately after his consecration, and for some time officiated in the diocese of Liege, Belgium, which for many years the Government had kept vacant, and which had to depend on visiting bishops for its necessities. He spent some time in Ireland also, and sailed for New York on the ship *Sally*, where he arrived after a tedious trip of sixty-seven days on the twenty-fourth of November, 1815. He had been given up for lost by priests and people. Archbishop Carroll at that moment was on his death-bed, and the reception of Bishop Connolly was without special ceremony; moreover, he had a bad cold and a general indisposition which confined him to his new home for a long time, and he did not attend the funeral of the great Archbishop of Baltimore, which occurred immediately after his arrival. Bishop Cheverus of Boston went up from the funeral of Dr. Carroll to install him with ceremony in his cathedral, and probably to explain his reasons for dedicating the said cathedral without the permission of its bishop.

The letters of the period leave no doubt that Bishop Connolly arrived highly displeased with the trend of ecclesiastical events in America, and also that in common with most Europeans he cherished illusions about American conditions which made certain immense disappointment. His see had only three churches, his cathedral was sixty thousand dollars in debt, his people numbered perhaps fifteen thousand, and four priests had to work beyond their strength to serve them. Before taking up the course of events in his administration, an account of the priests who aided the bishop will be in place, and will help to make clearer the actual history of the period. Father Fenwick was in charge, and remained at St. Peter's for another year, until recalled by his superiors to

Maryland. By that time the bishop had learned to appreciate him, and made a most earnest appeal to the Jesuit superior for his further services. The appeal failed. Father Fenwick afterwards became the second bishop of Boston and died there in 1846. An old schoolmate of the bishop's, Rev. Thomas Carbry, a Dominican also, had arrived in the city ahead of him, and remained attached to the cathedral for four years. In 1819 he went to live in Charleston, carrying with him most flattering testimonials of esteem from the trustees of New York; the people of Charleston became so pleased with him that they asked to have him for their bishop, a petition which Bishop Connolly supported with a strong letter to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda. However, Bishop England received the appointment, and Father Carbry died at sea on his way to Europe in 1829.

The most remarkable priest then in the city was the Jesuit Father Malou. Peter Anthony Malou was at this time a man of sixty years, a Belgian by birth, who had filled high positions in his native land at a critical period of its history. Wealthy, married, and a popular leader, he had first opposed the attempts of the Austrian, Joseph II, to destroy the Church, and then the designs of the French Republic on the liberty of Belgium. In the struggle of the time he held the rank of general in the Belgian army, was compelled to fly before the Terror, and took refuge in America. In the meantime his wife died, and when he went back to Europe his thoughts turned to the cloister, he entered the Jesuit Society, and was ordained a priest. In the course of time he found himself teaching in the Literary Institute of New York. In later days his son became a senator of Belgium, and his grandson Bishop of Bruges. From a relative he received a small pension, which he spent upon the poor, and he was fond of showing to his friends the portrait of one of his children painted on the lid of his

snuff-box. He remained assistant at St. Peter's for many years, became entangled in the trustee troubles (and was suspended by Bishop Connolly,) withdrew from the Jesuit Society and lived in retirement in the city, was restored to his old position by Father Power, and died in 1826, after a consistent, holy and remarkable career.

Rev. Michael O'Gorman was the youngest of the priests with the bishop, and came out with him from Ireland. His youth, zeal and ability made him dear to his superior and his people. He travelled all over the State for some years as far as the St. Lawrence, served as assistant at the cathedral, and died too soon, in 1824, just as the position of coadjutor had been asked for him by Dr. Connolly. Strange and interesting characters joined the diocese from time to time, among them Rev. Charles D. Ffrench and Rev. William Taylor, whose careers in New York were highly picturesque. Father Ffrench was a Dominican, a member of a noble Irish family, and a convert to the faith. Failing in an attempt to establish a house of his order in New Brunswick, he offered his services to the diocese of Boston, and while officiating at Claremont, New Hampshire, made the acquaintance of the famous Barber family, all of whose members entered the Church together. Father Ffrench had a share in this remarkable conversion, which stirred up the feelings of the whole community at the time, as a sign of the encroachments of Rome. He was invited to New York by Bishop Connolly, became assistant at the cathedral, and at once took a foremost place in the city, both as a churchman and as a member of society. Rev. William Taylor arrived about the same time in New York, and was stationed at St. Peter's. His history had a close resemblance to Father Ffrench's. He had been a Protestant and a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, a member of the aristocracy, with a brilliant future

Right Reverend John Connolly
1814-1825



before him, and he had turned his back on the good things of the world to become a priest in the American mission. Able and eloquent, he charmed the people of the city without regard to creed.

Bishop Connolly felt some consolation in the support of these two strong men, whose birth, breeding and ability brought the faith so prominently before non-Catholics. Unfortunately the dispute which had for twenty years or more disturbed the peace of the Church in America, the dispute between lay trustees and pastors as to their powers, intervened to nullify the good work of the two priests. They soon found themselves on opposite sides of the controversy, the result of which in their case, after acrimonious debates and correspondence, appeals and visits to Rome, was a peremptory order from the Pope for their retirement from the diocese. Father Ffrench finally settled in Boston and died there at the advanced age of eighty-five, and Father Taylor withdrew to France, where he lived until called to his rest in 1829.

Along the Hudson, Rev. Arthur Langdill exercised a roving pastorate between the cities of New York and Albany, and Rev. Father McGilligan seems to have worked on the same conditions northward towards Lake Champlain. A young Augustinian, robust, fiery, eloquent in Irish as well as English, Rev. Philip Lariscy, had charge of the people of Staten Island and did other work elsewhere as occasion required. Rev. John Farnum travelled along the Mohawk valley for some years, looking after the interests of the people in the neighborhood of Utica, Rev. James Salmon took charge of the people along the St. Lawrence, Rev. Awly McAuley, whose brother was chamberlain to the Empress Marie Louise, officiated in Brooklyn, Rev. Patrick Kelly began the work of building up the faith in Rochester, and Rev. Fathers Shanahan, Bulger, Brennan and Conroy, the young men of the day, were

sent about the diocese as the need demanded. At St. Peter's the noblest Roman of them all had his place, from which he never departed until death took him after thirty years of service, in 1849, the Rev. John Power, a young, brilliant, steady and progressive priest whose reward on this earth should have been greater were merit and fitness always known and properly honored at the right moment.

Such were the priests upon whom Bishop Connolly depended for the work in the vineyard, a capable and sincere group of men, quite as representative of the Church in learning, refinement and earnestness as could be desired. They were not numerous enough for the work to be done, and therefore much of it remained undone; but they exhausted themselves in the attempt to sanctify and keep in the faith all under their charge. The bishop at their head is described as a small-sized man, very neat in appearance, simple in his manners and positive in his opinions. He lived first at 211 Bowery Row, then at a house in Broome Street, and finally at 512 Broadway, where he died. He was often alone in the management of the parish, because his assistants had to make long journeys into the interior of the State; he heard confessions and did the work of visiting the sick, like a parish priest; and he sang mass usually without mitre or crosier because of the lack of proper attendants. The people of St. Peter's at one time walked up every other Sunday to the cathedral for their parish mass, which was omitted at St. Peter's in order to accustom them to attendance at the sister church, then very far out in the country. He does not seem to have mingled much in the social life of the town, or else we have no record; but that he was hospitable and entertaining is made evident by the stream of visitors that passed through his doors. Bishop England was often his guest, and Bishop Cheverus of Boston; the priests from Ireland, about to enter the American

mission, called on him; and the English Cobbett, author of the famous and amusing *History of the Reformation*, visited him and heard from his own lips that he had just returned from Rome. Considering his age, he was over sixty-four at his consecration, and the trials and labors of the mission, he must have had a vigorous constitution and used it well. At his death in 1825 nearly all his priests mentioned in this paragraph had died or departed. Of the six young men whom he ordained in New York three were dead; of those whom he had received into the diocese all had gone, but one or two, into other regions.

The people for whose salvation he had to take thought were scattered at long distances throughout the State, and were increasing in numbers every day. The problem of reaching them, keeping in touch with them, and saving them from easy apostasy or easier indifference, was large and irritating. The city itself had ten or twelve thousand Catholics, some hundreds lived in Brooklyn, a few families on Staten Island, a thousand perhaps in New Jersey; navigation having become easy on the Hudson through the traffic of steamboats, the villages on the river began to increase in population; Albany took on importance, and as far west as Rome the stream of immigration flowed. Catholics were to be found in all these districts. On the banks of Lake Champlain and the River St. Lawrence, French-Canadians had begun to settle from the year 1790. Wealthy men from the cities invested their money in the rich timber lands north and west, and formed colonies whose members were from the settled districts of the East, and often European and Canadian immigrants. Dominick Lynch, the famous merchant of New York, bought immense territory in central parts of the State, and encouraged immigration from all parts of the East. The founders of Ogdensburg and Plattsburg in the early days were dependent on Montreal for labor and supplies, and

carried on steady communication with that city. When the war of 1812 had ended, immigrants poured into the province of Quebec in English ships, and then found their way to the new colonies; and when steam navigation was established on the Hudson and on Lake Champlain the number of Catholic immigrants increased to proportions. The children of the Canadian and Acadian soldiers who had fought in the Revolution formed a colony by themselves in Clinton County north of Plattsburg.

Along Lake Ontario the labors of a French gentleman in the work of colonization had resulted in a remarkable success. Mr. James Leray de Chaumont was his name. He bought miles of territory in Jefferson County, and succeeded in planting three colonies thereon, the Germans at a village called Croghan, the Irish fifteen miles north at a place called Carthage, and the French along the St. Lawrence at Rosiere. Over a thousand Catholics were thus established, the number increasing with time. The landlord being a Catholic and a generous man looked after his colonists faithfully, built churches for them, and kept Bishop Connolly advised of their spiritual needs. When his financial affairs became somewhat entangled he signed over his properties to his son Vincent, and returned to France where he died in 1841. The son proved as faithful a proprietor as his father, and the names of both are preserved with respect and affection in the names of towns in that section; Cape Vincent, Chaumont, and Leraysville. The French were Bonapartists in the main, and this remote colony of the wilderness became a refuge for some of the leaders; here they hoped to secrete Napoleon after rescuing him from St. Helena; a house was prepared for him at Cape Vincent, around which for a brief period gathered the halo of conspiracy; nobles came and went mysteriously; then the death of the emperor cut away all romance and hope; and a single memorial of the con-

spiracy remains in the home of the Beauforts at Cape Vincent, a saffron-colored ribbon of the order of St. Helena, pinned by the emperor himself on the coat of an officer. Thus along the courses of lakes and rivers throughout the entire State the Catholics had settled in numbers as early as 1800, and Bishop Connolly's problem lay before him as plain as a map could make it; to get priests in touch with the Catholics scattered over so vast a territory.

A great public work just then added to the sharpness of the problem. For many years the Clinton family had been at the head of a movement to open up the State to immigration by means of a canal that would connect Lake Erie with the Hudson; and other parts of the State with the great canal by means of smaller canals. De Witt Clinton succeeded after tremendous labors in convincing the people of its possibility and its usefulness, and began the work of digging his big ditch, as the sceptics named it, in the year 1819. The demand for laborers became so large that ships could not carry them in sufficient numbers from Ireland and other parts of the country and the world. The big ditch was opened in 1825, and by that time the State held over one hundred thousand Catholics, half of them living on the waterway from New York to Buffalo. The inrush of Catholics was almost entirely Irish, for German emigration had not yet begun and the Canadians were kept at home, both by the influence of the clergy and by the horror which they cherished of a country that had given birth to the Address of John Jay to the people of England. Even the visit of Bishop Plessis of Quebec to the United States did not remove from him or his clergy their deep distrust of the Republic. The plan which Bishop Connolly adopted for serving his people was dictated by circumstances. The pastor of the village of Chambly, then a town of some importance south of Montreal, was given authority to look after the people of Clinton County as far south as he cared to go. Chambly

had a college in those days, which sent out many priests for the American mission, and had among its students Bishop Loughlin of Brooklyn and Bishop McQuaid of Rochester. To the town went the Clinton County Catholics for the sacraments, for baptisms and marriages and the Easter duties, for thirty years ; except when the visit of a stray priest or military chaplain enabled them to do as well at home. Rev. Peter Mignault, pastor of Chambly, accepted the commission of Bishop Connolly, was made vicar-general for that district, and held the charge for over ten years. This action provided temporarily for the eastern district of the North.

Rev. Michael O'Gorman was sent as soon as possible to look after the people of the Hudson, Mohawk, and Black River valleys. The bishop himself made a visitation of the Albany district in 1817, travelling as far north as Carthage and as far west as Buffalo, dedicating a church at Carthage, and confirming everywhere. Father O'Gorman became the pastor of Albany, and covered the entire territory as far as the Indian mission of St. Regis on the St. Lawrence. He directed the building of a church in Utica, which was opened in the year 1820, and placed in charge of Rev. John Farnum; about the same time a church was built at Rochester by Rev. Patrick Kelly, and another at Paterson by Rev. Richard Bulger; Auburn had a church in 1822, and Brooklyn built its first church in 1823; Rev. Arthur Langdill was given charge of the missions along the Hudson, Rev. Philip Lariscy looked after Staten Island, Rev. Father McGilligan sought out the wanderers north of Albany, and at times a travelling priest was impressed into the service for a month or a year to do what good was possible. Within five years of his arrival the bishop had his officers thus parcelled out at the important points of the diocese, and after eight years of labor he had secured churches in thirteen places. The great need was

priests, and the next need money ; he found it impossible to get either in his hard circumstances. He states it as his conviction that the American youth of that time had an invincible repugnance to entering the priesthood, which, considering the conditions, need not be thought marvellous.

The financial standing at that period should have been good, and money plentiful for beneficent enterprises ; but the system upon which the material affairs of a parish were conducted not only closed the fountains of charity but brought the church corporations in time to bankruptcy. Following the requirements of the law of 1784, each congregation had to form itself into a corporate body under the laws of the State, and the pewholders to elect trustees in whom the corporate powers were vested ; the trustees had complete control of the raising of revenues and of their distribution ; they invited the pastor to take charge of the parish, paid him a fixed salary, and dismissed him at their pleasure. This system seems to have worked well enough among the sects, and was probably based on their tried methods, but among Catholics it produced no end of discord ; and for a very simple reason : every baptized Catholic belongs to the Church, whether in the state of grace or not, and every Catholic has the right to enter a church, and to become a member of the parish, while he is a professed Catholic, reputable and respectable, though his practice of the faith may be poor. The pewholders of those early days very often professed the faith with their mouths, but lived the lives of pagans. Many of them were filled with heretical notions, and admired ultra-Protestant customs ; for example they thought more of a fine preacher than of a faithful priest who brought hundreds to holy living ; they elected trustees to manage the temporal affairs of the church, men of the same stripe as themselves ; and whereas the Protestant churches of the country got along well enough under

the same law, for the Catholics there arose dissensions everywhere from Boston to Charleston. The trustees could not collect enough money to carry on and develop the parishes properly, and they would not if they could. When funds ran short they invariably refused the clergy their small stipends; locked the churches upon priests and people whenever the circumstances required; rejected and accepted pastors very much as they pleased.

The struggle in New York illustrates the general condition at the time. The two churches in the city were under one board of trustees, and the financial management became so poor that neither bishop nor clergy could get a regular support. As a result the bishop secured independent incorporation for his cathedral, and the loyal Catholics elected for him a sensible set of trustees. His supporters then took measures to get control of the St. Peter's board, parties were formed, Father Ffrench led the friends of the bishop, and Father Taylor spoke for the other side; pamphlets, speeches, meetings were hurled at each other, appeals were made to the Metropolitan, Archbishop Marechal of Baltimore, who declined to interfere, and finally Father Taylor was sent to Rome in the interests of the trustees to make charges against Bishop Connolly and to ask for his removal. It is quite likely that the bishop himself was called to Rome, for Cobbett, the English writer, relates that on his visit to Bishop Connolly in 1822 the prelate alluded to a recent visit to Rome. The turmoil must have been severe while it lasted. At its close Fathers Ffrench and Taylor were ordered by Propaganda to depart from New York, and Father Malou was deprived of his faculties by the bishop, nor were they restored until after the prelate's death. Father Taylor, on his return from Rome, was ordered out of the diocese by the indignant bishop, and appealed in a public letter to the Catholics at large;

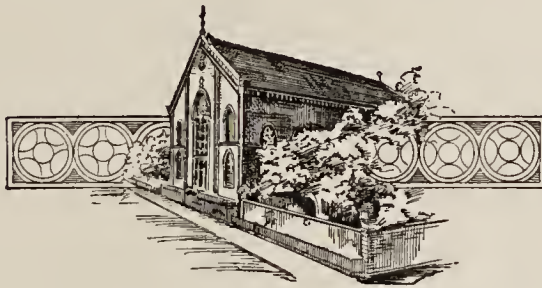
their answer was a public meeting in which the bishop was sustained and his opponents badly scored ; whereupon Father Taylor withdrew to Boston, served its bishop for a few years, acted as administrator of the diocese during the vacancy, and at last followed Bishop Cheverus to France where he died not long afterwards. The struggle with the trustees ended for the time in a drawn battle.

The last year of the bishop's life was filled with crosses. The clamor of the contest with the trustees had urged Propaganda to offer him a coadjutor, not only to save the situation but also on account of his years ; it was suggested that Bishop Kelly of Richmond, whose diocese had turned out a mere dream, would be a very proper assistant ; to which Dr. Connolly replied that the appointment was impossible, because Bishop Kelly had rendered himself a *persona non grata* by violently denouncing the religious incorporation laws of the country ; and he asked instead for his faithful assistant as coadjutor, Father O'Gorman. This young man was busy at the time with the problem of the finances, and had organized an association to pay off the church debts independently of the trustees. It was the only way out of a grave difficulty. His assistant in the work of the cathedral parish was the Rev. Richard Bulger, who had already served his time on the mission in all parts of the diocese, and had suffered for the faith. The old bishop must have rejoiced in the zeal of these young and ardent priests whom he had ordained, who had never failed him, and who would continue the work after his death. Alas ! both died within a week of each other in the November of 1824, and the old prelate closed their eyes, for they died in his residence on Broadway. The shock must have been bitter to the man of seventy-five, and his desolation must have increased at the loss to the diocese. He took sick after the Christmas season and died on

the fifth of February, 1825, at seven o'clock of a Sunday evening. The funeral took place at St. Peter's the following Wednesday. "The remains of the pious, worthy and venerable Bishop Connolly," says the *New York Gazette* of that date, "were entombed yesterday afternoon, attended by a larger concourse of people than is usual on such occasions. For the last two days the body of this good man lay in state in the central aisle of St. Peter's church in Barclay Street, and it is said that not less than thirty thousand persons visited this novel exhibition. Everything connected with this ceremony was conducted in a most solemn, appropriate manner, and reflects much credit on the Catholics of our city."

The young priests were buried in the cathedral near the south door, and the bishop was buried near the altar. He had ruled the diocese over ten years, faithfully if not with success. He was a keen man, and able, and attracted men like Bishop Hobart, head of the Episcopal church in New York, whom he almost converted. His appreciation of the conditions in America was shrewd, and his recommendations for ways and means worthy of note. He was made arbiter frequently in difficult cases. He had much to do with the affairs of the Church at large in the United States, and learned a great deal during his administration. He failed in dealing with the trustee question, and he was not successful in dealing with his priests. Every character has its limitations. The difficulties which arose and the clamors which he stirred up alarmed the Roman authorities for the safety and peace of the Church in America. In the last year of his life the Orangemen made their appearance in the country in their famous role of rioters, parading in the villages of Greenwich, Paterson, and Lockport on the 12th of July, carrying their insulting banners through the streets, and in their drunken fury attacking many Catholics. In New York

they were arrested and punished, Thomas Addis Emmet and William Sampson prosecuting them. They were to continue in evil and to grow strong in insolence for the next half century almost. Their appearance in this country at that early date was a portent of the evil times that were to come.



St. Patrick's Cathedral

CHAPTER V

BISHOP DUBOIS AND HIS CLERGY



Rev. John Power

DURING the interregnum the diocese was governed by Vicar-General John Power, the pastor of St. Peter's, whose six years' residence in the city had proved him a man of parts and energy, steady, tactful and blessed with administrative ability. At this date he was about thirty-four, of fine appearance, of gentle and persuasive disposition, and he had won a reputation for his ability to get along with the trustees, his popularity with the general public, and his eloquence. In fact, if a bishop were to be chosen from the priests of the diocese, his experience and qualifications fitted him for the high position. Almost his first act was to restore Father Anthony Malou, suspended by the late bishop, to his proper place, and to take him as assistant at St. Peter's, where the old and distinguished priest remained for some time. He died in 1827. He placed the Rev. John Farnum in charge of St. James' in Brooklyn, which was then an important parish, remarkable for the spirit of its people in church work.

Father Farnum had shown ability and enterprise in looking after Utica and the Catholics of the remote regions of the State, and had been thirteen years in the ministry. The local history of the time describes him as a young man of agreeable manners, six feet tall, a good speaker, inclined to stoutness, somewhat pompous and pretentious in his bearing, and quite ready to take

his part in public affairs. His appointment to an important parish was received with joy by the congregation, and in a short time he made his capacity evident. He completed the church, built a good rectory, and opened an orphan asylum with the Sisters of Charity in charge; and as he mingled with the general society of the town his popularity gave him great prestige. Unfortunately this good beginning did not continue to the end. (Convivial habits led him into such imprudences that) his bishop suspended him, and deposed him three years later. Whereupon he set out to build an independent church in the town, and to gather about him his unfortunate sympathizers. For some years he kept up the schism, collecting everywhere, and everywhere posted in the journals as a suspended priest; but at last funds and prestige failed him together, his church was closed by the creditors, and for a time he sank into obscurity, until in 1845 his friends made intercession with Bishop Hughes, who restored him to his rank, gave him permission to seek a new field in Detroit, and recommended him to the care of the bishop in that see, where he died in the year 1847.

The cathedral parish was placed in charge of Rev. Thomas C. Levins and Rev. William Taylor. Dr. Levins, formerly a Jesuit, for some years had taught mathematics and other sciences at Georgetown College, and upon leaving the Jesuit community settled in New York by invitation of the late bishop. His perfect training and fine acquirements made him a welcome addition to the diocese. Father Taylor, as we have seen in a former chapter, had just resigned from a good position in Boston and was awaiting only a favorable opportunity to join Bishop Cheverus in France.

With men like these about him Father Power thought it would be a good time to begin the publication of a Catholic journal,

following the excellent example of Bishop England of Charleston, who, three years previous, had founded *The Catholic Miscellany* for the enlightenment of Americans generally as to the character of the Catholic Church. Accordingly he established *The Truth-Teller*, a weekly paper, whose first number was issued on April 2, 1825, under the management of two gentlemen, George Pardow and William Denman, and for many years, until merged in other publications, this journal served its purpose with considerable distinction. In the interest of the orphans of the diocese—and at that period of cholera and yellow fever, severe hardships endured by emigrants and scarcity of work, they were many—the administrator undertook to build a new asylum that would give shelter to one hundred orphans. To gather funds he gave lectures, secured Bishop England to deliver an eloquent discourse, and persuaded the famous Malibran, then visiting the city with her opera company, to give an oratorio in the cathedral; and with the funds thus secured he was enabled to carry on the work, and to complete it by the close of the year 1826, when it was opened ceremoniously with one hundred and fifty orphans in its care.

The need of more churches for a population steadily increasing led to the purchase of an old Presbyterian church on Sheriff Street and the formation of a new congregation with the title of St. Mary's. The charge of it had been given by the late bishop to the Rev. Father McGilligan, a priest who had been working for some ten years among the scattered Catholics of the State; but before its completion this priest had returned to his wandering life and established the first parish of Plattsburg on Lake Champlain, where he died in the year 1828. St. Mary's was dedicated in May of 1826, and Rev. Hatton Walsh, the newly appointed pastor, delivered the dedication sermon. The activity and energy

of the administrator, and his success in bringing each enterprise rapidly to a finish, the group of capable priests whom he gathered about him, and the spirit which he infused into his workers, led to the popular belief that he would be chosen bishop of the diocese. The discussion as to a fit person for a difficult place had been going on for some time, and the Roman authorities had informed themselves of the merits of various candidates. Father Power had only his youth against him, and it was a great disappointment to the priests and people of the diocese when the announcement came that the Holy See had chosen Father John Dubois, an eminent priest of the Sulpician community, who had labored for many years with great success in the diocese of Baltimore. While there could be no objection to the worthy and distinguished man thus honored, the clergy and the people felt it keenly that their predilections had not been considered at all by the Roman authorities.

The new bishop was a Frenchman, born in Paris in 1764, and ordained for that diocese at the age of twenty-three, in time to meet the advancing wave of the Revolution and the Terror. He had been a college-mate of Robespierre and Camille Desmoulins, and, according to Shea, took the constitutional oath under the Republic. When the work in Paris became impossible, he secured letters of introduction to American notabilities from Lafayette, obtained the aid of Robespierre in making his escape, and reached the United States in disguise in 1791. He joined the diocese of Baltimore immediately, became an American citizen as soon as possible, and began with ardor his missionary work. Clever intellectually, well grounded in the learning of the time, vivacious and tactful, as might be expected from one of his race, disinterested and sincere, Dubois became a force in the Church speedily. He made the acquaintance of the distinguished people of the time,

and President Monroe, with whom he lived for some time, was his friend. His greatest achievement, after he had become a member of the Sulpician community in Baltimore, was the foundation of St. Mary's College at Emmettsburgh, Maryland, an institution which in almost a century of existence has by splendid work perpetuated the fame of its founder to this day.

It was a very proper recognition of his successful labors on the mission, that in his sixty-third year he should have been honored with the purple. He was still vigorous and vivacious, tenacious of his opinions, convinced that no obstacles could stand long against his assault. His consecration took place in Baltimore on the twenty-ninth of October, 1826, amid a splendid gathering; Archbishop Marechal, assisted by Bishop Conwell of Philadelphia, and Administrator Power, presided; the great people of the time and the students of his college crowded the church; he wore the ring and the cross presented to him by Carroll of Carrollton; and the sermon was preached by the eloquent, and sometimes erratic, Father Taylor. The preacher seems to have given a rather harrowing picture of the unfavorable conditions in New York, which struck a chill to the heart of the bishop. He was much relieved on getting to New York that there were no signs of rebellion. He was installed in his cathedral on the Sunday within the octave of All Saints, when Father Power preached the sermon and resigned the administration into his hands. His reception was frigid. The people who listened to the known and beloved Father Power resigning his office had dreamed of seeing him their bishop on this day; and here was a stranger and a Frenchman on the throne!

Bishop Conwell had heard during the summer that there had been debates in New York, whether Bishop Dubois should be admitted into the churches. It was decided to admit him, but

to give him trouble afterwards as a person intruded on the people by undue influence. Yet Dubois wrote in a few weeks to a friend that he had nothing but consolation since his arrival, saw around him only good will and union, and felt that the frightful prognostications of Father Taylor had vanished like smoke. However, he thought it advisable to reply in a fashion to the accusations and criticisms touching his promotion, and his first pastoral letter gives a lively view of the situation. It was charged that Archbishop Marechal of Baltimore and the Sulpician Fathers had by underhand intrigue secured his nomination to New York, whereas the archbishop had opposed it, and the Sulpicians, like himself, were absolutely ignorant of his appointment until the bulls arrived. In answer to the objection to his nationality, he wrote: "If we were not long ago American by our oath of allegiance, our habits, our gratitude and affection, thirty-five years spent in America in the toils of the mission and of public education, would surely give us the right to exclaim, We, too, are American! But we are all Catholics. Are not all distinctions of birth and country lost in this common profession?" The objection that a priest of the diocese should have been chosen he answered by pointing out that only one priest had been in it any length of time. The rest of the letter was taken up with a description of the needs of the diocese, the lack of all things, and the plans for schools and academies, charity homes for the aged and the immigrants, and the firm observance of discipline, such as the holding of marriages, baptisms and funerals in the churches instead of private houses. The letter was received coldly, and *The Truth-Teller* disdained to give it place in its columns.

Affairs were most unpleasant for an old man, and the condition of the diocese very bad. The bishop counted thirty thousand Catholics in the city with only six priests to attend to them, and

one hundred and twenty thousand in the rest of the diocese with twelve priests to minister to their needs. A majority of the priests were unsettled persons, who came and went at their pleasure, and could not be relied upon to remain for any length of time. For three years the bishop studied the situation carefully; he made many visits about the diocese, and one long visitation which took in the entire diocese north to St. Regis and west to Buffalo, in 1828. Travel along the Erie canal was at that time comparatively pleasant. The journey up the Hudson was made in the elegant barge, the *Lady Clinton*, or her consort, the *Lady Van Rensselaer*, towed by one of Fulton's primitive tugs; at Albany a stage carried the traveller to Schenectady, where the canal barges left every morning for Buffalo. The speed was four miles an hour; the passengers sat on the roof of the saloon until the lookout shouted, "bridge," when all scampered within until the bridge had been passed; or they walked along the tow-path until tired; at night they slept on cot-beds in the grand saloon, behind which was the bar, and back of that the kitchen; the whole a great improvement on the stage-coach.

At Buffalo Bishop Dubois found a congregation of eight hundred Irish, French, German, Canadian and Swiss, for whom he did all that was in his power, and sent them a priest the next year; at Rochester he preached a mission and gave confirmation; at Utica he placed a priest whom he had ordained the year before, Rev. Luke Berry; he visited all the missions along the Black River, and was received in great state by the colonists of Mr. Le-Ray; at St. Regis he settled the differences between the Indians, and gave them a mission; he visited Montreal by way of the St. Lawrence, and went down to Plattsburg by steamer along the River Richelieu and Lake Champlain; at this city he met his vicar-general for the northern district, Father Mignault, and

Right Reverend John Dubois
1826-1842



the pastor, Father McGilligan; and finally he returned home after visiting the little missions that lay between Plattsburg and Albany.

The visitation displayed the gravity of the situation in his diocese, for it was not only the lack of priests and the scattered condition of the Catholics that hampered the general progress, but also the bad spirit of the leading laymen, who, as trustees, would not permit the priest to undertake any enterprise on the mere strength of faith, would not permit him to collect for school or charity, and so hampered him that the most willing and capable missionary had to fold his hands and sit inactive. Bishop Dubois saw no way out of his difficulties but to collect in Europe the money which could not be got at home, and to invite zealous priests to work on the American mission. This was the result of three years' study of the conditions, and it could hardly be called a happy one for various reasons. The Catholics were numerous, steadily employed, the leaders had fair fortunes, and while wages were not the best, there was a decent amount of spare money in the country. Had the bishop found a way, as his successor did later, to reach the multitude, and roused them first to a share in the work, his European trip might have been unnecessary, or its success not have been so soon exhausted. The first provincial council of Baltimore was to be held in the autumn of 1829, but the bishop having made his arrangements, sailed away to Havre in September, with the intention of remaining in Europe until he could return with enough funds and priests to make his position in New York more fruitful of good. He left Father Power and Rev. Felix Varela to govern the diocese in his absence, as his vicars-general.

The colleague of the brilliant Father Power was a Cuban by birth, and a young man of promise. In his native island he had

represented for a time his country in the Spanish Cortes ; driven out by political troubles, he settled in New York, learned the English language, served as assistant at St. Peter's for a time, and then, with his own funds, bought in 1827 an Episcopalian church on Ann Street, and had it dedicated as Christ Church. The secret of his appointment as vicar-general lay in the coldness existing between the bishop and Father Power, and while the appointment was most acceptable to the wealthy Spanish residents of the city, its intended rebuke to Father Power rather intensified the ill-will and sourness felt against the bishop. This feeling Father Varela's personality did much to soothe. He was a devoted priest, a learned man, a student, and a clever writer. In the thirty years of his work in New York he gave away to the poor and to works of charity all that he had, living with the utmost simplicity ; he published works in Spanish which had a wide circulation in Cuba and other Spanish colonies. In English his controversial articles had great vogue and success, and for the Catholics he helped to edit a leading journal of the time ; he readily accepted the public challenges of the ministers to discuss the doctrines of the Church, and easily held his own with the untutored theologians of the sects. He never would become a citizen of the country, saying as his excuse : "I am in affection a native of this country, although I am not, nor ever will be, a citizen, having made a firm resolution to become a citizen of no other country, after the occurrences which have torn me from my own. I never expect to see it again, but I think I owe it a tribute of my love and respect by uniting myself to no other." The two administrators got along together quite amicably, and in the public documents of the diocese signed their names Father Power as vicar-general of the State, and Father Varela as vicar-general simply. The latter was chosen by the bishop to represent him at the council of Baltimore.

Bishop Dubois was in Europe two years. His report made to the Propaganda gives his view of the situation in his diocese financially: the common people were too poor to provide funds, and the rich were unwilling to give unless entire control of the property was vested in them. He instanced the project of a French church for New York, which fell through because the subscribers insisted on its being made a joint-stock concern, so that at any time they might sell their shares. There was great need of a seminary to train priests for the diocese, instead of depending upon outsiders, and he asked for funds to found such an institution. The Pope and the cardinals gave the bishop substantial help and encouragement, and dismissed him in the best of humor for his tour of Europe.

It was the troublous time of 1830, and the country was very much disturbed; yet he managed to gather some thousands of dollars and a large amount of books, vestments, and other utilities for the mission. He failed to secure any priests. With the great Lacordaire, then in his eclipse after the Lamennais scandal, he had interviews on the subject, and almost persuaded him to begin a new career in New York. One can fancy what an obscuration of a great career such a transfer would have been, although nearly as great a man, Bishop England, was struggling for the faith in the obscure wilderness of South Carolina. Bishop Dubois returned home determined to open his seminary. During his absence many things of importance had occurred; churches had been dedicated in Paterson and Albany, Father Varela had opened another orphan asylum, and Father Power had opened a new academy for girls in Mulberry Street, under the charge of the Sisters of Charity; the church of St. Mary had been burned to the ground, perhaps by an incendiary, and it was thought that the shock killed the young pastor, for the Rev. Luke Berry died a month later. The church

was speedily rebuilt in a new location on Grand Street within a year.

With great ardor the work of the seminary was taken up. The bishop bought a farm of one hundred and sixty acres at the village of Nyack on the Hudson, perhaps thirty miles from the city, and in May of the year 1833 he laid the corner-stone of a structure eighty feet square, flanked by two wings, and crowned with a dome. The work went on until the sum of eighteen thousand dollars, collected in Europe, had been expended, and then the bishop appealed to the people for further funds. He had already opened the seminary with two professors and five students, who occupied the old farm buildings, and for whom a neat chapel had already been erected. They never had the pleasure of taking possession, for the new building was destroyed by fire. As the anti-Catholic agitation had begun, a strong suspicion prevailed that the fire was the work of an incendiary, as in the case of St. Mary's Church a few years before ; but no proof ever was obtained to confirm the suspicion. The building had not been insured, so that the loss to the bishop was simply calamitous, and he had never the heart to undertake the work again. Some years later, in 1838, he purchased property in the LeRay colony at Lafargeville, not far from the St. Lawrence, and opened a seminary there under the charge of Rev. Francis Guth ; but after a few years the project died, owing to its distance from the see and also to the fact that Bishop Hughes had appeared on the scene, and was exerting himself in various ways.

Between the rising ill-feeling among the Protestants and the steady opposition of the trustees, Bishop Dubois must have felt the burden of his seventy years keenly in spite of his sturdy spirit and hardy constitution. He had failed in his college and seminary schemes, and partially failed in the effort to provide good schools

and ample charities ; therefore he devoted his remaining time to the building of churches and the securing of energetic priests for the mission. In the city he added to the number St. Joseph's, in the village of Greenwich, St. Paul's in Harlem, St. James' in Oliver Street, the new Christ Church on Chambers Street, and the German Church of St. Nicholas. Throughout the State, along the line of the Hudson, the Erie canal, the Champlain canal, Lake Champlain and the river St. Lawrence, he saw church after church arise, and was able to provide them with priests. In New Jersey and in Brooklyn the faithful were fairly provided with the necessities of worship. The clergy were blessed with representatives of high character in the troubles of the time ; and in the controversies opened by the leaders of the anti-Catholic party, four champions of great skill and learning presented the Catholic argument with great ability, Father Power, Father Varela, Father Levins, and Father Constantine Pise. All were clever writers, and in the journals which they established found opportunity to express the feelings of the Catholic body. Bishop Dubois had a great dread of controversy, fearing the consequences if the bigots roused themselves to frenzy ; but he had done nothing to stir up feeling and he could do nothing to allay the rising storm. The fight had to continue until the people came to their senses.

The trustees filled his days with sorrow. At one time he had almost succeeded in establishing a boys' academy at the cathedral, but the opposition of the trustees put an end to it at one meeting. (Although he got along very well with his priests, as a rule, he fell into a dispute with Father Levins, and suspended him from his functions.) The trustees of the cathedral immediately appointed the priest principal of the school, gave him a salary, and not only declined to pay the new assistant at the cathedral, but threatened to cut off the bishop's small stipend. Father Levins took up his

residence in the city, and devoted his time to the management of a journal which he published, and to his favorite sciences. It is significant that the title of the journal was "The Green Banner." He did not continue it long, and withdrew after a time all connection with bishop and trustees alike, devoting his leisure to science, lending his engineering skill to the erection of the Croton aqueduct, and keeping obscure until a new administration relieved him from obloquy. He was restored to his proper standing by Bishop Hughes, but owing to the failure of his sight never resumed mission work, dying in 1843.

Two eminent priests of the period were Rev. John Raffener and Rev. Constantine Pise, the latter pastor of St. Joseph's, the former missionary and vicar-general for the Germans. Father Raffener founded the church of St. Nicholas in New York, and travelled about at intervals from Boston to Buffalo, looking after the Germans, building churches for them, and holding them to the faith. Owing to persecution at that period in various parts of the German states, large numbers of the people, both Catholic and Protestant, were forced to seek a refuge in the United States. For thirty years Father Raffener saw to their interests, and left no group of them unserved in all the territory of New England and New York. Father Pise was a native of Maryland, born of an Italian father and an American mother, and for a time had belonged to the Jesuit community. Upon leaving it he took up mission work in Baltimore, but joined the diocese of New York at the invitation of Bishop Dubois. His reputation as a writer was well deserved by his poetry, his novels, and his histories. His affable and gentle manners and his elegance of person were much praised; and as a journalist he won esteem for his share in the founding and maintenance of "The Catholic Expositor." The Austrian Father Schneller who had been ordained by Bishop Dubois, distinguished

himself by his controversial ability, and founded with Father Levins and others the *New York Weekly Register and Catholic Diary*, for the better exposition of the faith ; a journal which later was merged into another, made famous by the ability and caustic wit of its editor, *The Freeman's Journal*.

It would be impossible to mention more than the most noted priests of the time in this history ; but one may see that the clergy, in spite of the deficiencies of the time, had sterling representatives in their small group, who kept the faith strongly before the inquiring world. In 1837 Bishop Dubois, feeling the weight of age and care, asked for a coadjutor. The usual difference of opinion arose as to the fittest person for the position. Father Power had not lost prestige in the eleven years that had passed since Bishop Dubois' consecration, and had a steady advocate and friend in the great Bishop England of Charleston. The priest finally chosen for the honor and the pain had the support of the bishops, and the approbation of Bishop Dubois, and him the Pope selected, Rev. John Hughes of Philadelphia. His name for some years had been famous in the Catholic body, and the letter which Bishop Dubois wrote him on the occasion of his nomination will show what was thought of him. "My Dear Friend," writes the bishop to the priest who had formerly been his pupil, "your favor of the thirty-first ultimo, which is the only information (official) I received of your nomination by the Holy See, to the coadjutorship of New York, afforded me much consolation in the hope that you will find in it, as I do, an expression of the divine will. One part of your letter only created in me a painful sensation : I allude to the apprehension of a contingent disunion which might take place between the bishop and his coadjutor. You surely could not suppose a moment that I would encroach upon the rights and privileges attached to that sacred office, and I have too great an opinion of

your merit and affection for me to suppose that you would encroach upon mine. . . . That scandals should have arisen between Bishop Conwell and his coadjutor, who is *ex-officio* sole administrator of the diocese, is no wonder, with a man of the bishop's disposition ; but I am neither reduced to the nullity of Bishop Conwell—a circumstance rather painful to human pride—nor would I be disposed to struggle for the mastery if I had been placed in his situation ; I would have considered this nullity as a warning from the divine goodness that henceforth all my time must be exclusively devoted to my preparation for death ; but as it is you may be sure that I will always be happy to act in concert with you. . . . May Almighty God bless you for his greater honor and glory and be assured that, as I have already proved to you, you have a sincere and devoted friend in me.”

The appointment did not give general satisfaction. (Bishop Kenrick thought or feared that “the influential clergy of New York would see with pain a clergyman placed over them who they might not conceive had an equal title to that mitre with themselves.” Bishop England opposed the nomination, refused to recommend him, and interested himself in behalf of Dr. Power whose eminent services and fine character entitled him to promotion. Dr. England wrote to the coadjutor : “I was fully aware, from my knowledge of the partiality of His Holiness to you, that whenever your name was presented to him the appointment would be made. . . . I did wish to see you in the episcopal body, and perhaps to the general attaining of that object I have done some little. . . . I acknowledge that your task is by no means light, but I feel convinced that you are more likely to perform it creditably and usefully than any other that I know.”) The influential clergy of New York did not relish the choice of an outsider, and have left on record their disapproval. Nevertheless the thing was done, and on the seventh of January,

1838, John Hughes was consecrated bishop in the cathedral of New York, Bishop Dubois officiating, assisted by Bishops Kenrick and Fenwick. The attending crowd was so great that platforms were built along the windows outside for the overflow, and through the open windows they could witness the novel ceremony, for the first time performed in the city. They must have been hardy people to endure open windows and the platforms in the month of January. Bishop McCloskey's impression of the ceremony was given in his sermon on the death of Hughes a quarter of a century later. "I remember how all eyes were fixed, how all eyes were strained to get a glimpse of their newly-consecrated bishop ; and as they saw that dignified and manly countenance, as they beheld those features beaming with the light of intellect, bearing already upon them the impress of that force of character which peculiarly marked him throughout his life, that firmness of resolution, that unalterable and unbending will, and yet blending at the same time that great benignity and suavity of expression, when they marked the quiet composure and self-possession of every look and every gesture, of his whole gait and demeanour, all hearts were drawn and warmed toward him. Every pulse within that vast assembly, both of clergy and of laity, was quickened with a higher sense of courage and of hope."

Bishop Dubois, after the consecration of his coadjutor, practically retired from active work. Two weeks later he suffered from a stroke of paralysis, and although he kept his hand on the wheel of government, his active mind began to give way under the strain of disease. Bishop Hughes wrote to Propaganda that his faculties both of mind and body were very much impaired, so that advice and persuasion had no influence in keeping him from blunders. Naturally he was unconscious of his own condition, and when the Roman authorities decided that he should retire from the adminis-

tration entirely, and Archbishop Eccleston brought the decision himself and notified the old man that the coadjutor was now become sole administrator, the news fell upon him like a calamity. At first he seemed inclined to rebel, crying out : "What wrong have I done ? They cannot take away my authority unless I am guilty of crime ! I will never give it up, never !" It was only a momentary outburst of natural feeling, partly due to the infirm mind. When he recalled the fact of his age, seventy-five, when he reminded himself of his incurable illness, of the growing diocese and the growing difficulties, he meekly accepted the situation and surrendered his authority ; to use his own words, "he obeyed the bit, but not till he had covered it with foam." He lived three years afterward, quite reconciled and cheerful, spent his time in preparation for death, officiated occasionally for old friends in well-loved places, and bore himself with the dignity of his position and the patience of his age. He could not, however, overcome a natural repugnance to his coadjutor, whom he blamed for his humiliation, and who was now his superior ; they met no more, though living in the same house, unless of necessity ; and the old kindly relations were never resumed.

No blame could be attached to the coadjutor, however. He took no comfort out of the position, which exposed him to criticism, (such as that from Bishop England in "The Catholic Miscellany": "We are now aware that the jurisdiction of the see of New York is in Bishop Hughes, and not in Bishop Dubois, who has the title with the honors due to that station, whose duties his age and infirmities have prevented him from discharging. We have learned this for the first time from France. Bishop Conwell of Philadelphia and Bishop Dubois of New York are then precisely in the same condition." This sharp and ironical paragraph Bishop Hughes resented for its fling at Bishop Dubois as "perfectly gratuitous and

unnecessary.” Bishop Dubois died on December 20, 1842, at the age of seventy-eight, after a thoroughly consistent, laborious, successful, and holy life ; his failures were the fault of the times ; his foundations still remain ; and his memory is a benediction in the Church.



New York Literary Institute, Latin School of Jesuit Fathers

CHAPTER VI

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PARISHES



Rev. Felix Varela

UNSETTLED conditions in Europe, no less than the promise of fortune in the new Republic, helped the stream of emigration that poured in a steadily increasing volume into the United States after 1830. New York was overcrowded, and the most rapid building could not keep pace with the growth of population. As soon as Governor Clinton's canal became a certainty the far-seeing business men of the time hastened to buy lands along the route, and to prepare for extensive colonization. Although to the majority the "Big Ditch," as the scoffers called the Erie Canal, was not destined to succeed, nevertheless it was making money in the second year of its existence; and this fact led to the building of other canals in a short time, like the Champlain or Northern Canal, which connected the Hudson and Lake Champlain. Compared with the previous decade travel became easy and communication rapid. When Fulton's steamboats began to ply on the Hudson and the lakes, travel became luxurious and commerce most active; the workman and the farmer and the tradesman found plenty to do and money to make; and the Catholics enjoyed their share in this modest prosperity. They were for the most part Irish peasants, forced to fly from intolerable conditions at home, and for whom flight had become easy since the War of

1812, and the establishment of fairer relations between our country and England. The enterprise of the Irish, when their treatment by England is taken into account, proved remarkable. They followed the course of progress wherever it led, to the farthest limits of the State and beyond, and engaged in every profession, trade and business. The number who took up the saloon trade in the cities led to the popular belief that the Irish engaged in nothing else; but for one saloonkeeper there were twenty farmers, shopkeepers and laborers.

The Germans did not begin to come in numbers until after the year 1830, although in the city of New York they were numerous enough in 1808 to think of separating from St. Peter's to form an independent parish, in 1820 they had a colony in Lewis County, and in 1829 Bishop Dubois found a large number of them in Buffalo. They came to this country better prepared for the hardships of the new life than the Irish, having had some freedom and opportunity as citizens of Germany, a larger training and a better chance to save up money for the American enterprise. New York City had its French and Spanish colonies, not large in numbers, but choice in character and refinement, the merchants of the period, representatives of great commercial concerns in Europe, and thoroughly official Catholics. Their religion never troubled them except as individuals, and but for special effort they would have disappeared from the Catholic fold before the middle of the century. Along the border a sprinkling of French-Canadians was to be found, hardy and necessitous people, who had ignored the warnings of their priests against the dangerous Republic, and sought homes in the wilderness, where lumbering, saw-mills and grist-mills gave them their accustomed work and better wages than at home. Then there were Swiss, a very few Italians, and the exiles of San Domingo. They scattered to every part of the State, and

the problem which Bishop Dubois had first to solve was supplying them with priests and churches. He himself was unwearied in travelling about among them, not only confirming and encouraging, but doing the work of a missionary, and providing them with means to build their churches. The same troubles which drove Europeans to America also operated to drive priests into his diocese, priests of all nationalities. They did not come early enough or fast enough of course; the loss of many souls to the faith was the sorrowful and inevitable result, but it could not be helped under the circumstances. When Dr. Dubois first took charge of his diocese, he estimated his people at one hundred and fifty thousand, the priests numbered eighteen and the churches about fifteen. At his death, while the population had increased to two hundred thousand, the churches numbered nearly sixty and were attended by forty priests.

The growth of these churches depended upon two factors, the increase of population and the increase of the people's savings. The most important structures were to be found in the city and large towns, and along the lines of travel; but they did not begin to be important until the settlers had been long enough in the country to own property and have money in the bank. Therefore few churches were built up to 1835. In the next five years as many churches were built as in the preceding forty years. The year 1829 saw the dedication of a church at Buffalo, for which a Mr. Le Couteulx had given the lot, and of another at Salina, for which the records give large credit to James Lynch and Thomas McCarthy. Albany began a second church in 1830, with funds loaned by Bishop Dubois, and churches were dedicated in Newark, New Brunswick and Macoupin, New Jersey. In 1831 the towns of Jersey City and Madison, in the same State, put up respectable churches. The village of Greece, near the mouth of the Genesee

River, had a church in 1832, and at Rosiere, not far from the St. Lawrence, in Jefferson County, the French colonists planted there by Mr. Le Ray de Chaumont had their new church dedicated by Bishop Dubois himself. His presence was made the occasion of such a celebration as Old France was accustomed to hold in a bishop's honor. The settlers came from the remotest farms, finding their way to the church through the thick forest by means of the blazed trees. When the bishop arrived, old soldiers who had fought under the famous Napoleon stood in ancient uniform at the door and presented arms, and the ceremony was conducted with military honors. In 1833 the new St. Mary's on Grand Street, New York, was dedicated, and the corner-stone of St. Joseph's in the village of Greenwich, was laid. As this part of the island was a hot-bed of Orangism the parishioners were forced to guard at times their structure against the attacks of the bigoted. The building was dedicated in 1834 by the bishop, and at the ceremony three future bishops attended, Hughes, McCloskey and Quarters. That same year churches were dedicated at Auburn, Geneva and Cold Spring, on the Hudson, the latter being a peculiar and dignified temple so located on the banks of the river as to be visible to this day to the traveller. The painter Weir was so struck with the beauty of the scene that he made it the subject of a most successful painting. The Germans, under Father Raffeiner, dedicated the church of St. Nicholas in New York in 1835, the corner-stone of St. Paul's was laid in Brooklyn, and at Ogdensburg, on the St. Lawrence, a long-delayed church at last received dedication.

By this date the Catholic people had settled into comparative fixity, had saved money, and had garnered a large experience in religion. Consequently the activity of the year 1836 in erecting

churches became as remarkable as it was consoling to the bishop and clergy. In the city three churches were dedicated, St. Paul's in Harlem, St. James' in James Street, and the Transfiguration on Chambers Street. The old Christ Church on Ann Street had to be abandoned on account of weakened walls, and as the congregation was divided in opinion about a new locality, one part erected the church of St. James, and the other bought a Protestant church which they converted into a very handsome building. Father Varela, as pastor, advanced the money for this purchase. St. John's Church at Paterson was dedicated the same year; also a church at Saugerties on the Hudson, and another at Seneca Falls; the corner-stone of a new church was laid in Utica with much ceremony; in Keeseville of the Adirondacks a very handsome church was dedicated; and at Hogansburgh on the St. Lawrence a solid stone church, sixty by forty, under Father Salmon, was completed. In the year 1837 probably ten churches were built, one in Brooklyn, a German church in the same town, St. Peter's in Poughkeepsie, St. Peter's in Rome, St. Mary's at Fort Covington, St. Joseph's at Malone, and a few others whose dedication was without pomp and without record. In 1838 the Germans completed a church at Rochester, and the towns of Eden, Lockport, Massena, Watertown, and Belleville, New Jersey, were provided with respectable places of worship. Even the unprogressive parish of St. Peter's in Barclay Street, hampered by the management of the trustees, had succeeded in erecting a new church in place of the old, which had been so splendidly dedicated in the presence of the ambassadors of France and Spain. Father Power saw the new church dedicated in February of 1838 by the coadjutor, Bishop Hughes, almost the first ceremony he performed as a bishop.

The difficulties in the work of church-building, which was really

the work of organization, must have been very great. The sums to be obtained by direct contribution could not have been large because the people were not rich. The leading Protestants of the neighborhood often kindly contributed, and the records give evidence of their readiness to provide land, and sometimes money, particularly where the church served to hold the population to the town, or to a necessary industry. The clergy collected money from their friends abroad, or sometimes, as in the case of Father Varela, loaned part of their paternal estate to the church corporation. Frequently the sale of an old building, a public hall or a church, was taken advantage of, to get a church cheap. The society for propagating the faith sent considerable money to Bishop Dubois, who collected also from his friends at every opportunity. At Keeseville and at Fort Covington, where a wealthy resident gave the land, the people turned out in a body to do the building themselves; they cut and drew the timber and the stone, laid the foundations, helped to put up the frame, shingled the roof and painted the clapboards, arranged the grounds, laid out the graveyard, and even built the altar. The architecture was of the wilderness, like most of the churches in that period, and the ornamentation purely domestic. The journals went into ecstasies over the Italian altar which was placed in St. Joseph's, and the stained-glass windows of the church in Auburn were vastly admired; but they would hardly be called splendid in our day. Bishop Plessis of Montreal thought the painted perspective in St. Patrick's cathedral, by which the nave was made to appear twice its actual length, very charming and impressive! The services in the churches were of the simplest even in the cities, because the pastor had out-missions that demanded his attention. A low mass and a brief sermon were all that could be given; music was quite unknown, of the voice or of the organ; in Lent there were special services where the population

could attend, and the long sermons of that day were mostly preached on these special occasions. Until priests became more numerous it was utterly impossible to provide what is so common to-day. The finances of the parish were grave problems, after the church had been built; how to support the priest and keep the other expenses paid. The trustees of the church were the great men in the parish, and as we shall see later on they irritated the people and hampered the clergy. They haggled over the question of salary, and made bids for the service of distinguished priests in Ireland and elsewhere. The spirituals were fairly administered under the conditions; the sacraments had to be administered anywhere and anyhow; and we find the synods and councils reminding the clergy that this practice had to be stopped as soon as possible, lest an exception should become a rule through custom, and the church be forgotten as the home of the sacraments.

The morality and the piety of the people were of a fair standard. It was not a time very favorable to either, owing to the influx of all sorts of people from the old world, and the unsettled conditions in the Republic itself. The old order had passed away with English rule, the old rigidity in manners and customs, and the spirit of French atheism had invaded the aristocracy. The histories of the time bear many complaints of the change in religious feeling, of the dangerous freedom allowed to all, of the spread of French literature. The Catholics must have found their environment particularly dangerous, because they had come from old Catholic communities, where atheism and sensuality and indecorum were not even to be named, let alone tolerated or smiled at as evidences of freedom of mind. Liberalism had become the fashion in Europe, and the new form of it in 1830 had a most deadening effect on believers. Freemasonry had become very popular, and

was now advanced as a theory that might renew the moribund Christian world. An old record book of a parish in those days had a note to the effect that George S. Wise died universally lamented; "he was continually assisting us, had a benevolent heart, was attended in his last moments by Dr. Power, and died, it is hoped, a good Catholic." The ending of the paragraph is explained by the curious fact that the gentleman was buried with Masonic honors. Freemasonry resented the attitude which the Church took in its regard, and lost no opportunity to do harm. Fortunately Catholics at that period did not seem desirable members for the society; even the willing apostates were discouraged from membership, unless their wealth and position recommended them. Liberalism and the spirit of independence together wrought some havoc among Catholics; the former supplied theories of action, and the latter led to fantastic exhibitions of personal freedom from the control of authority. Jefferson's declarations on the rights of man, and Tom Paine's dangerous principles were taken up by the uneducated and untrained, and used against church, state, parent, teacher, and sage. One has only to read the Letters of an American Farmer by Hector St. John De Crevecoeur to understand the mental muddle of a Catholic Liberal at that period.

The wealthier Catholics suffered most from the evil influences abroad. Their ignorance of the mere catechism was remarkable; the spiritual life did not seem to be within their experience; the sacraments they did not receive only under compulsion; their attitude towards priest and church was completely Protestant. This was made evident by their actions as trustees of church property and as pew-holders with the right to vote. The priest was esteemed neither for his personal qualities nor for his sacred character as the dispenser of the sacraments, but for his ability

to satisfy their vanity. They hired him like a clerk, and dismissed him when he failed to please them. Although Father Kohlmann, in charity, did not mention the name, it seems certain that old Dominick Lynch was the man who threatened to have Father Charles Whelan removed by act of the legislature if he would not leave St. Peter's of his own accord. No one thought of the sick and dying left without the consolation of the sacraments by the departure of the priest. Mixed marriages abounded, and oftener than otherwise the children became Protestants. Out of such homes no vocations for the altar or the cloister could come. Bishop Connolly was so disappointed on this matter that he put on record his belief that Americans had an invincible repugnance for the priesthood. The test of a priest was his preaching. They asked no more than a good sermon once a week, and an obliging demeanor at all times. In their view the Church should not hold any property, nor its ministers have any power over the temporalities; the laity were to conduct the business as a business, and the principle of charity was ignored, of which an amusing illustration was the attempt of the French to build a church as a stock concern. The Protestant method then popular had the preference of official Catholics.

However, this feeling was only a passing phase born of unfortunate circumstances, for which no one was to blame. The mass of the people remained sound in their faith, as the mass does usually when it is not the interest of the heresiarchs or the rulers or the aristocrats or the doctrinaires to lead them astray. They rejoiced to see the priest, to have his ministrations, to receive the sacraments, and to build the churches. The poor laborers along the Erie Canal or in the woods of the North, gave of their little to keep a priest amongst them, to build him a house and church, and never thought of temporalities. When the priest lived among

them their faith abounded, and the rosary society, the altar society, the children of Mary, the charity committee, and often the temperance society, appealed to special tastes in the work of spirituality. The lively and convivial nature of the Catholics made friends among the more serious natives. In some ways they were socially strong in spite of the hatred and secret opposition of the bigots. They were members of local societies, sometimes presiding officers, and could gather about them the choice spirits of the neighborhood. In fact the period between 1825 and 1840 showed a cordiality of feeling between Protestants and Catholics that has never since been surpassed. For example, St. Patrick's Day in 1826 was celebrated in Brooklyn by the Erin Fraternal Association, made up of Irishmen of both creeds and the usual honorary members of other nationalities, who marched in a body to hear mass at St. James', listened to a sermon on the Saint, and then sat down to a banquet over which an Irish Methodist, Robert Snow, presided. Ten years later this era of good feeling had vanished. The Orangemen had found their way to the United States.

Among the eminent Catholics of the time who seem to have remained untainted with false principles was Dr. William James MacNeven, the Irish physician who came to New York in 1805, after a romantic career in Europe, and for thirty-six years held a foremost place as a brilliant student, a successful professor and a social leader of the time. He helped to found the New York School of Medicine. In his last sickness Dr. Power prepared him for death and Bishop Hughes administered the last rites and sang his requiem. Another was Peter Turner of Brooklyn, who, during a long life, held a foremost position in Catholic work, and whose monument in St. James' churchyard tells the story of his devotion to the faith. As against Bishop Connolly's contention

that Americans had no vocation for the priesthood, George McCloskey, the merchant, gave the Church a bishop and a priest, and Peter Turner's son became vicar-general of Brooklyn. A famous family in Utica from the earliest days was the Devereux, and another the Kernans. While the false doctrines of the time led many astray, it would be easy to make a long list of intelligent and successful people in whom the faith kept its purity and its fire unspotted and undimmed. The work of building up the faith went on successfully.

While the organization of parishes, the obtaining of priests and the building of churches took up all energies, other pressing needs received some attention. We have seen how Bishop Dubois failed to provide his diocese with a seminary, for which he had not the funds, and for which there was no urgency at that time, with Montreal and Baltimore so easily reached. He would have done better had he used the general seminaries and turned his money and his energy into primary education. He, perhaps, thought he could do both. The question of religious education was quite as imperative then as now, and the clergy had the proper idea of its merit and importance, with the sects busy already in winning proselytes among the children. Father Levins wrote in *The Truth-Teller* of August 1, 1829, the following sound and sonorous statement on proper education for the young: "Were I asked what is the evil which in a religious and moral point of consideration presses with most severity on the Catholic community of this city, I would without hesitancy say, the want of that education which blends religion with the education of the mind, and I should consider him the best benefactor to our community who most amply aided in establishing this system of education. This opinion may perhaps clash with the modern cant term, liberality; and possibly in the Catholic community there may be those who

are votaries of this mischievous idol. Should any of the liberal class demand why I would blend religious instruction with education, I would answer: Because, first, education conferred unaided by religion is a curse; and second, the Catholic religion in this city cannot receive a fixed and permanent increase unless this mode of education be adopted."

There were only three schools in the diocese, an academy near the cathedral, a school in St. Peter's and another in Utica, opened after 1830 by the Sisters of Charity. There were, however, many private schools fostered by the clergy, and eight or ten church schools in charge of lay teachers. The private school was for many years the refuge of parents really interested in the proper training of the children, when they could bear the expense. The public aid given to St. Peter's Church school was withdrawn as soon as it became evident that Church schools would multiply rapidly with State aid. The private schools were profitable and quite numerous. We read in the journals of the time diverting notices and advertisements of these schools. Mrs. Carroll of London, in soliciting the patronage of parents for her school on James Street, declared that her pupils "will be carefully instructed in the English language, grammatically and with its true natural accent," and "flatters herself that the discerning and enlightened part of the inhabitants of New York will encourage her in her anxious endeavors to disseminate useful knowledge among their rising generation"; Mr. and Mrs. John Walsh, for their school in Doyers Street, announced that pupils of both sexes would be carefully instructed "agreeably to the best and most improved plans in all the various branches constituting an useful and a liberal English education"; Mr. William McGuckin, "having studied in one of the first universities of Great Britain, having spent all his life in receiving or communicating information, and

having consulted most of the systems of education extant, he flatters himself that he has attained the great desideratum for instructing, viz., to develop the mental faculties by analysis through the medium of the senses"; and most ambitious of all, Mr. P. S. Casserly, whose son Eugene became United States senator from California in 1869, established on Cherry Street a "Chrestomathic Institution for general education." These small schools, together with the Church schools taught by laymen, in time had some five thousand pupils, and evidently suggested to Bishop Dubois a scheme for their better government. He undertook, with a Mr. Boylan, to form a community of male teachers for teaching boys, but the scheme failed owing both to the attacks of the trustees and the disfavor of some among the clergy.

There were only two orphanages in the diocese, that established by Bishop Connolly in New York, and another at Utica, founded and partly maintained through the generosity of the Devereux family. No other charities could be supported, nor could nuns be secured to direct them. The orphan asylums could not contain one-half the applicants. It was the period of yellow fever and cholera, of destitute and ill-fed immigrants dying by the score, leaving their children to the poorhouse and the Protestant mission. Hard-pressed to maintain this charity, Bishop Dubois finally ordered that the Christmas collections in the churches should be turned over to the asylum. Many hundreds of children must have been lost to the faith, but no blame could be attached to bishop and clergy, who did their uttermost to save the orphans. For much of the passing history of the time we are indebted to the journal called *The Truth-Teller* established by Father Power in 1825, as soon as the death of Bishop Connolly gave him a free hand. Bishop England, by

establishing *The Catholic Miscellany* in Charleston, had demonstrated the usefulness of a journal, and many other cities imitated his example. Bishop Fenwick founded *The Jesuit* in Boston, and later *The Catholic Press*, or *The Catholic Expositor*; Philadelphia had a *Catholic Herald*, established by Rev. John Hughes and a famous Augustinian of the time, Rev. Nicholas O'Donnell; and New York started a journal for any decent excuse.

One may shrewdly suspect that admission to the columns of *The Truth-Teller* was difficult at times, therefore arose the *Weekly Register* and *Catholic Diary* in 1833, with Father Levins and Father Schneller in charge; and the next year, to offset all the others, *The Catholic Expositor* was founded by Father Pise and Father Varela. Death and the merging process wiped out the New York journals before 1850, the *Freeman's Journal*, under the famous MacMaster, succeeding to their honors. Their pages are valuable today as contemporary records, and for their own day they served capably for defence and explanation. Their methods were controversial, and therefore harsh and vigorous. Bishop Dubois had little love for them, as he feared the effect on the Protestant population when once the writers escaped control. Father Levins wielded a caustic and imprudent pen, and none of the writers when screened by the editors refrained from vituperation. However, the journals accomplished a good work in spite of their defects; they helped, in a measure, to keep the Catholic body conscious of itself, of its larger duties, and of the work going on in other dioceses, and gave such men as Dr. Pise an opening for their literary work. While not as vigorous a writer as Father Levins, being of a gentler and more æsthetic temper, he possessed the poet's imagination and true literary grace, as his poems and stories show. In a happier day Father

Pise would have climbed the heights; he had to be content with doing what was absolutely necessary, and even for that he suffered the denunciation of the Puritans, to whom the novel and the poem were inventions of the devil for man's destruction.

The faults and failings of the time found their strongest and most serious expression in the bad spirit of the trustees of the churches, which as an affliction that raged in the entire Catholic community and threatened schism, was known as Trusteeism. Its origin in New York began in the method of electing the trustees of the parish property, as required by the law of the State. An Act passed in 1784, and amended in 1813, prescribed the conditions upon which a parish could hold property and carry on the parish business; the pewholders of the church had the power of electing the trustees, and the trustees had all the rights and privileges peculiar to their office. While this system seemed to give Protestant parishes no trouble, because the membership of a church was regulated by particular laws, the fact that Catholics remained members of the Church until practical apostasy cut them off, led to very serious troubles. The pewholders might be the poorest of Catholics and yet have the power of voting; and the trustees chosen might be depraved characters, lost to faith and to clean living, yet hold their position. Time proved that the parishes could not be administered under the system; the trustees everywhere usurped powers which did not belong to them; they refused salaries to a priest appointed by the bishop because they did not approve of the appointment, and they paid salaries to suspended priests; they threatened to cut off the bishop's salary at one time; they debated the propriety of receiving him at all upon his first coming; they closed the churches when they saw fit, and it became evident that in time their growing powers would

overwhelm the Church itself. The pomposity of these men can be laughed at now, for in large part the spirit of self-importance led to their follies.

The results, however, were serious at that time; they stood between the people and the priest, and cut off all spontaneity of action; there was to be no more voluntary charity, only the precise methods of a banking-house; the people could not give unless in secret, and the pastors could undertake no enterprise in behalf of the poor unless the trustees voted permission; so the churches fell into bankruptcy, and the pride of the trustees brought them to the ground. They printed and distributed placards denouncing Bishop Dubois almost as a speculator of church funds, when he discovered a way of escape from their power in the tenure of the Nyack property. This was vested in three bishops, and could not be controlled by the trustees. When Father John McCloskey took charge of the parish of St. Joseph's, in 1837, the pewholders gave up their pews and withdrew, because the bishop had refused them a pastor of their own choice. For some months the young pastor preached to empty pews in the middle aisle, although he had a fair congregation in the remainder of the church. His able and attractive preaching and his fine personal character overcame opposition in time, and after months of childish annoyance the pewholders returned to their duties. Among them was the founder of the Chrestomathic Institution, before mentioned. At Utica the trustees drove out every priest that displeased them, preferring that the sick and dying should go without the sacraments than that their will should be crossed.

It is quite probable that Bishop Hughes was sent to New York, not only because of his natural talent, but because of his ability to fight Trusteeism. A year after his consecration he took the proper measures to destroy it, and killed it at a single blow. The trustees

objected to a teacher in the Sunday-school and when the bishop refused to remove him at their request, they had him forcibly removed by a constable. This incident gave Bishop Hughes his occasion for destroying the trustees; on the following Sunday he addressed the congregation on the matter in such a way as to intimate that he was prepared to accept an apology; of course no apology came, the trustees having no suspicion of their coming fate; on the next Sunday he read a pastoral from Bishop Dubois on Trusteeism, and announced a meeting of the pewholders in the schoolroom for that afternoon, to discuss a situation which must end either in the submission of the trustees to their superiors, or in the withdrawal of bishop and clergy from the church and an interdict on the parish. At the meeting, consisting of six hundred people, Bishop Hughes addressed them with all the power of his eloquence. They had never heard before from pulpit or platform speech so masterly, so moving, so convincing. He played upon their emotions and their faith with the skill of a great advocate. He had taken the right step anyway, for the people as a body were not with the trustees but with the priests; and this direct appeal, so beautifully and touchingly made, swept away the trustee barrier like a flood. He moved a preamble and resolutions, of which one may be quoted: "Resolved, that we know no difference between the authority of the Holy Church and that authority with which she has invested the bishops, for carrying on her mission and for our spiritual good; and that we hold it as unworthy of our profession as Roman Catholics to oppose ourselves or to suffer any one in our name to oppose any let, obstacle, or hindrance—no matter how legal such act may be—which would hinder or prevent our bishop from the full, free, and entire exercise of the rights, powers, and duties which God has appointed as inherent in his office, and the Church has authorized him to preserve, exercise, and fulfil."

The defeated trustees were given the alternative of recording their own sentence in the minutes or of resigning, by acclamation. The record was made, some resigned, and the next election returned a board of Catholic trustees, who could administer the temporalities without insult and interference. However, until the proper legislation did away with them altogether, they remained in power; but their evil spirit was dead.



Church of St. Joseph

CHAPTER VII

PLEASANT RELATIONS WITH THE STATE AND PEOPLE



Rev. Constantine Pise

THE relations of the Catholic body with their neighbors, from the building of St. Peter's to the end of Bishop Du-bois' administration, continued amicable and kindly, in spite of the efforts made by the unwise and prejudiced to disturb them. The political influence of France and Spain, allies of the United States, had much to do with this happy condition; and when time and events had estranged the allies and removed this great moral support from the Catholics, political principles and methods intervened to preserve harmony between two rather hostile sets of Christians. Official favor, as in the days of Washington, restrained domestic strife. The example set by the Father of his Country in accepting the address of the Catholics on his election to the presidency, and in replying to it with stately phrase and sincere cordiality, had its proper effect. It established a tradition, it became the bulwark of our wisest leaders, behind which they retired when their friendliness to Catholics brought upon them the assaults of bigotry. The famous Clinton family of New York could therefore treat with favor as well as with justice Catholic citizens, appealing to the great Washington as their model; and even with the contrary example of John Jay, who harassed the Catholic body as far as he dared, men like Gardinier, city attorney under Mayor De Witt Clinton, and lawyers like William Sampson, were not afraid to defend cases peculiarly

Catholic ; such as, for example, Father Kohlmann's confessional case, and the Orangemen's riot in Greenwich Village in 1824.

The political parties had to bid in due time for the votes of the naturalized citizens. The Whigs had failed in this respect, because at heart their leaders cherished a dislike for the foreigner, and in particular, for the Catholic foreigner ; a dislike which so powerful a man as John Quincy Adams delighted to display, and which actually drove into the Democratic ranks the entire body of Catholic immigrants, and kept them there. At any date between 1800 and 1840 the Catholic vote had little political value, except in a closely contested local election ; but when later it became a valuable political asset, the Whigs had lost by their utterances and by their behavior all chance of getting even a small fraction of it ; wherefore their descendants still cherish the ancient exclusiveness and sour distrust of the naturalized citizen peculiar to their forbears. The political shrewdness of the Democrats, and the kindness of their leaders towards the emigrant, led them to interpret more exactly and more generously the American principle of equality for all citizens. This generous and thoroughly American spirit made up to Catholics for the loss of the influence of France and Spain.

The social strength of the Catholic body was in the early days quite equal to their numbers. Bishop Connolly cultivated the friendship of the Episcopal bishop of New York, Bishop Hobart, and hoped to make him a Catholic ; in this he failed, although Dr. Hobart's daughter later joined the Church. In the social circles of the time Father Taylor and Father Ffrench enjoyed eminence ; for both had been Protestants, and university men, and could talk to the aristocracy in its own tongue. The grace and geniality of Dr. Power made him a general favorite ; Dr. MacNevin was a social light in his day, and his house entertained the

best people of the town ; Bishop Dubois was the friend of President Madison, and for a time lived next door to him on Prince Street. Then the most eminent merchants of the city were Catholics of Spanish, French, and Irish birth or extraction ; not a few Italians and Portuguese, and some Cubans. There was nothing obstreperous in the profession of the faith by its adherents. Archbishop Carroll had steeped his priests and people in caution, and left them a tradition of peace and quiet, which in some districts afterwards was carried to excess. The clergy dressed like the ministers ; Bishop Dubois deprecated the readiness of his priests to rush into public controversy ; the trustees and their circle reduced the Catholic body, as far as they could, to the level of an insignificant sect.

The press of the time, representing political partisans, was very favorable to the Catholics, and reported their public church functions in the prevailing pomposity of diction. The *Long Island Star* of March 23, 1826, thus wrote of Father Farnum's sermon on St. Patrick's Day : "We were deprived of the satisfaction of hearing it, but understand it conveyed an eloquent and instructive sketch of the patron saint and comprised also a feeling and animated view of the relative duties of foreigners." The editor was fishing for votes for the Whig party. The great ecclesiastical functions held on different occasions made a great impression and received large space in the journals, probably on account of their novelty. The dedication of the new cathedral by Bishop Cheverus of Boston in 1815, when the amiable Frenchman, who afterwards became the cardinal archbishop of Bordeaux, walked in full pontificals behind a procession which included the board of aldermen and the solemn trustees, must have created a sensation. The funeral of Bishop Connolly at St. Peter's drew crowds to see the body in its episcopal robes lying in state, and to witness the mass

of requiem. The reception of Bishop Dubois, with the political clamors that surrounded it and the threats of the dissatisfied, also drew great attention ; and finally, the consecration of Bishop Hughes in 1838, which, for splendor and significance, threw all others that had been into meanness by comparison, fairly tasked the most elaborate English of the time properly to describe. The newspaper men felt that the Catholic Church had become a moving force in the city, and perhaps in the nation. Even the bitter attacks of the sects helped to this feeling, inasmuch as the Catholics remained wisely silent.

Legislation favored the Catholics by leaving them to develop after their own fashion. The various Acts of the legislature from the Act of Religious Corporations in 1784 down to the last year of Bishop Dubois' life were always friendly, although Bishop Kelly of Richmond severely denounced the principle and the method, a denunciation which Bishop Connolly thought so badly of that he refused to accept him as a coadjutor. An Act of the legislature in March of 1806 gave St. Peter's free school a share of the public money for its support. Catholics were easily elected to local and State offices on the strength of their character and political influence, their religion seeming to cut no figure in their success. The influx of immigrants did not at first seem to change this general good temper on the part of political and social leaders. The immigrants were a patient, cheerful, hard-working set of people, so content with the freedom of the new land as to bear all hardships cheerfully. Some of them became riotous owing to a plenty of money, the low price of American whiskey, and the pernicious activity of low demagogues, who stirred up strife in the Irish colonies to further their own ends. For years along the canals and railroads the faction fights between the Fardowns and the Corconians and the Connaught Rangers disturbed the community

and disgraced the respectable people, and it required much effort to suppress the rioters and the agents of disorder.

This was only a passing phase, however. The religious people overcame the evil example by their own piety, and their efforts to build up little homes and to erect their churches and schools received the sympathy of Protestant neighbors. At Albany the Protestant friends of the Catholic community helped them establish their two churches; at Utica the same generosity was shown. Mr. Roswell Colt gave the site for the new church at Paterson, New Jersey, in 1828; at Cold Spring on the Hudson Mr. Gouverneur Kemble gave so handsomely towards the erection of the church as to merit a loud denunciation from his critical brethren. The story of this generosity could be repeated for nearly every parish in the State, and the motive of it, while mostly sprung from the desire to keep the population anchored to a town and an industry, was often founded in kindly feeling and in the American tolerant spirit. An incident which perfectly illustrates all that has been said on this point, viz., political wisdom, kindly feeling, and social strength, happened in 1839, when William H. Seward was the governor of the State. In Lewis County a man had been condemned to death for the crime of murder. As he was a Catholic, the pastor of the district, Rev. Father Gilbride, went to visit him in prison and to prepare him for death. The prison officials refused him admission. The priest appealed to the governor, and Seward promptly opened the doors of the prison. The incident caused great commotion at the time, and fortunately for the Catholics it was not really debatable among sensible people, unblinded by prejudice. The bigots did not look well, even to sincere Protestants, in the attempt to force their religion on a condemned criminal, and Governor Seward won great praise and immense political benefit from his action and his public letter on the affair.

The steady growth of the Church, the impression made by her public ceremonies, and the devotion of her children, amid the tremendous discouragements of the period, had a marked effect on thoughtful and observing people, brought up in the popular beliefs concerning the Catholic Church. Face to face with the Church in action they began to feel that the slanders of the historians were not truth, and they were irresistibly drawn to examine the problems for themselves. A beautiful illustration of the effect of Catholic devotion and ritual upon the refined people of that day, is given in the story of a convert, Miss Jackman of Boston, who lived almost to her hundredth year. When Bishop Cheverus built his first church in Boston, she and her brother heard wonderful stories of the Christmas celebration, of the strange vestments, the sweet music and the Infant in the crib. They could not resist a stolen visit to the wonderful temple, and returned so captivated with what they had seen and heard that they must enact the drama in their play over again. Their good father heard the boy imitating the chant of the priests at the mass, and, unseen, witnessed his innocent imitation of the ceremonies; then he rebuked the children gently, supposing that their behavior meant ridicule, and showed them that to the Catholic his strange ceremonies were as dear as absence of ceremony to the true Protestant, and that every man had a right to worship God in his own fashion, therefore ridicule was unbecoming and unjust.

The steady attendance on the Sunday mass, and the crowding of the poor churches on holydays and in times of devotion like Lent and the month of May, made a profound impression. Holydays were then unknown to the Puritans, for they had long abolished all but Thanksgiving. The Catholic working people, in order to attend mass on Christmas Day, Good Friday, and other feasts, were forced to rise at five in the morning, and get back to work

at seven. More than one soul found his way to the faith through hearing the tramp of the churchgoers before dawn, and seeing the crowds at the evening devotions. From the very beginning the converts were numerous and very often distinguished. Conversion was so astonishing an event in that day that it created more grief, surprise and indignation than the fine progress of the Church. Men could account for the advance of Romanism on general principles, which explain the strange upspringing of evil, but no one could explain a convert from Luther to the Pope. Such defection, like the treason of Benedict Arnold, had no genesis.

Boston saw one of its favored children, a minister of its own training, become a priest and found a church within the city, Rev. John Thayer, and he became a rather embarrassing citizen wherever he settled, owing to his taste for controversy, or rather his eagerness to make all his nation Catholic. When Father Taylor was administrator of Boston in 1823, he received into the Church a noted physician of the time, Henry Clarke Bowen, a graduate of Harvard and a well-known member of the Congregational sect. The Methodists, in 1808, had to mourn the departure from their ranks of Rev. John Richards, a minister of great zeal and energy, and of strong character. He had been an itinerant preacher for some years, and had been much exercised over the growth of the Catholic body, as witnessed in the conversions of John Thayer and Mrs. Seton. In the course of his labors he arrived in Montreal, and with his usual enterprise determined to convert the entire Catholic body to the truth, as he saw it, by converting the leaders. He began with the Sulpician community, the society which has charge of the chief seminary and of the noted parish of Notre Dame. The fathers received him with true Catholic courtesy, listened to his arguments, and also presented their own contentions. Mr. Richards found himself reading the Catholic

side of the religious question, and was astounded to learn for the first time of its reasonableness. Like most men of the day he had been brought up to believe that the Roman Catholic Church occupied a place somewhat lower than Mahometanism and Buddhism, that it was pure superstition without form or merit or leaders or teachers. It had never seemed possible that so wretched a religion could have a case worth maintaining before intelligent people. He made a close study of the Catholic argument for many months, with the result made plain in his own diary: "As I progress the truth seems to me more clear, so that I am fully convinced no doctrine has been more misrepresented, as far as I can understand it. I see nothing but what has the sanction of God's Word."

The journals must have given him some publicity, for the case excited great attention, and his anxious superiors called upon him to explain his relations with the Sulpician community, an invitation which he declined until he had completed his examination and reached a conclusion. His study ended with the resolution to embrace the Catholic faith, a step which he announced to his brethren in a letter of great kindness and sincerity. After his conversion he studied several years in the Montreal seminary, and was ordained priest of the diocese in the month of July, 1813; then for thirty-four years he labored as earnestly in the priesthood as formerly in the Methodist ministry, and died in 1847 through having contracted typhus in attending the Irish immigrants. His conversion naturally created some stir, and his Methodist brethren undertook to counteract the effect by printing a small book, at Brooklyn in 1809, entitled *An Inquiry into the Fundamental Principles of Roman Catholics*. Father Richards made no reply to it, and courted no publicity. All that remains of his own views is contained in a diary noting the progress towards

his conversion, and the letter announcing his intention to become a Catholic. The Methodist reply illustrated nicely the knowledge of the time. The author set up the arguments which he supposed seduced Father Richards from the right path, and then demolished them with great ease and success. The esteem in which the good priest was held by his former brethren was witnessed in the praise bestowed on him in Bangs' History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Many striking conversions occurred in various parts of the country during the period from 1815 to 1820, which again raised public interest and curiosity to a high pitch, and also produced no little indignation. The rector of the Episcopal church of St. George became a Catholic in 1816, probably under the influence of Bishop Connolly. Rev. Mr. Kewley was an Englishman, a graduate of Eton and of Cambridge; he had practised medicine in the West Indies, and then turned to the Church, being ordained minister in 1803. After serving in various places he became rector in the city of New York. After his conversion very little is known of him, except that he returned home, entered a religious house in Belgium, and was visited by Bishop Hobart during that gentleman's stay in Europe. Mr. Kewley's conversion was emphasized later by that of the Rev. George Edmund Ironside. The excitement created by his departure led to many printed assaults upon his motives, and these again to a vigorous defence from him. No doubt the feelings of sound Protestants were hurt by these unexpected apostasies of intellectual and prominent persons, to a religion so utterly and hopelessly condemned. In New England, about this time, an entire family went over to the Catholic faith, the famous Barber family of New Hampshire, with whose conversion the Rev. Charles Ffrench had much to do. When Bishop Connolly first visited Albany he received into the Church two

residents of the village of Lansingburgh, a suburb of Troy, a Miss Eldridge and a Mr. Keating Rawson. Wherever men were brought into close observation of the Catholics and their religion, and had the courage to examine for themselves, conversions became numerous. Owing to the circumstances they were in many points most remarkable. The conversion of the Barber family in New England and the Dodge family in New York will serve as illustrations.

The story of the Barber family is told at large in various memoirs. They were a pious and ministerial family, consisting of Rev. Daniel Barber and his wife, his daughter Rachel and his sons Israel and Virgil. Virgil was an Episcopalian minister like his father, and held a position in the village of Fairfield as pastor of the church and principal of the seminary. The village was well known in that early day, and long kept its reputation, perhaps until the close of the century. It was situated a few miles north of Utica, and received the children of the best families for their school training. The Irish settlers had already made their way to Utica, but had no pastor at the time. In the Barber household was an Irish servant-girl, who had in her possession a prayer book called *A Novena to St. Francis Xavier*. Mr. Barber read it with pleasure, became deeply interested in the life of the great missionary, procured what books he could on the apostle of the Indies, and was led into a new way of reasoning. As Bishop DeGoesbriand gives it: "How could a religion which forms such men be a mere human institution? Peace then departed from my soul. I had doubts concerning the truth of my Protestant faith. I began to study very seriously, and the more I studied the more my doubts increased. These doubts I submitted to my bishop, Dr. Hobart of New York, hoping thereby to find peace, but he gave me no light on the subject, and rather strength-

ened my doubts, as he paid no serious attention to my objections. We were at this time standing at the window of a room whence we could hear the singing going on in a Catholic church near by. I took occasion to ask the bishop, 'Do you think that those can be saved?' At this question of mine he could not help smiling, and answered, 'They have the old religion, don't you know? But they do too much, and one can be saved without so much trouble. Do not trouble yourself about such matters. Go back home in peace, and if you wish to do so, consult your brother ministers, and your religious scruples will soon vanish away.'

"I returned home from that interview more disquieted than I was before. I put down on paper my objections against the Protestant religion in the shape of fourteen questions, and I invited many ministers of the Episcopal Church to come and visit me. To each of them as they came in I presented this terrible sheet of paper. They all glanced at the questions, and none failed to say, 'Well, well, we'll see after tea.' But after tea we had music at the piano, and as no one attempted to answer the questions I then resolved to see and consult the Bishop of Boston." In the meantime, on a visit to New York he met Father Fenwick, the assistant at St. Peter's. For some months they discussed the claims of the Catholic Church, until Mr. Barber found that he must join the one true fold, although the change meant severe hardships for his little family, now living in such comfort. "Trust your affairs to the management of a beneficent Providence," said the priest—words quoted from his own diary. "Embrace the truth now that you have found it, and leave the rest to God. He has led you on to make this inquiry. He has followed you step by step, and now that you yield to His grace will He abandon you? No, believe me, you were never more secure of your subsistence."

Mr. Barber was baptized, resigned from his pastorate and his principalship after explaining the reasons for his step, and found himself deserted at once by his former friends, and also annoyed in various ways. With the aid of Father Fenwick he opened a school in New York and succeeded in making a fair living. His wife became a Catholic and his five children were baptized into the faith. In a short time husband and wife became absorbed in the idea of devoting themselves entirely to God in religious communities, and sought the aid of Father Fenwick to accomplish their desires. He interested Archbishop Neale of Baltimore in the matter. As the children had to be properly provided for arrangements were made with the Visitation nuns to take charge of the mother and two girls, and old Mrs. Fenwick adopted the baby Josephine. In the chapel of the college at Georgetown, before the archbishop and a large number of witnesses, Virgil Barber and his wife renounced each other to devote their lives to God, and the prelate gave his sanction. The father, and later, his son, Samuel, entered the house of the Jesuits. In time both became priests; the two daughters became Ursuline nuns; the mother and the youngest daughter joined the Visitation community.

One can imagine what astonishment this event created in the Barber family and in the entire community. Virgil spent a year in Rome at the Jesuit novitiate, and in the year 1818 was back in America visiting his parents in Claremont, New Hampshire. He brought with him from New York the elegant and accomplished Father Ffrench. Rev. Daniel Barber had followed his son's course closely and with sympathy. He had his own doubts about the Protestant position, and he had consulted Bishop Cheverus. He was quite prepared for events on the occasion of his son's visit. Within a week Father Ffrench had practically converted Rev.

Daniel Barber, his wife, his daughter, his sister, Mrs. Tyler, and her daughter, Rosette Tyler. They were all received into the Church at various dates, and with them came other members of the family. Rev. Daniel Barber, on the death of his wife in 1825, took minor orders and died a sub-deacon, it has been affirmed. Two of Mrs. Tyler's daughters became Sisters of Charity and her son the first bishop of Hartford. The last of this wonderful family died in Quebec, at the Ursuline Convent in the year 1885, or thereabouts. Father Virgil and his son, Father Samuel, died in the Jesuit community. The little Novena to St. Francis Xavier bears noble testimony to the value of the printed Word.

The Dodge family lived not far from the Fairfield neighborhood, although their history is of a later date by twenty years. Their home was at Pompey, sixty miles west of Utica, and Bishop Hughes was the first to tell their story, in the annals of the Propagation of the Faith, after his visit to them in the year 1839. The Dodge family were people of character and refinement, good Protestants and eminent. Mr. Dodge held a colonel's rank in the State militia and the position of deacon in the local church. When Dr. Power of New York dedicated the new church at Salina in 1829 Mrs. Dodge was overcome with grief. At sight of its foundations the previous year she had raised her hands in horror and cried out against this near approach of the dreadful and dreaded papists. One winter evening in the year 1836 a Catholic business man drove by the residence of Colonel Dodge with a load of goods which he had purchased in New York to transport to Cazenovia. His sleigh broke down at the Dodge door, and the Colonel hospitably invited him to spend the night with him. The man, whom we shall call Mr. Driscoll for convenience, was an Irishman, still young, aged thirty-six, well-favored, with

a fine complexion, rich color, dark blue eyes, and black, curling hair. His natural intelligence had been sharpened by association with the relatives of his Protestant wife, and in defence of his faith he had learned much of popular controversy with which to meet the arguments and objections of his relatives. After supper the conversation turned on religion, in which Colonel Dodge always took the deepest interest, and a remark unfavorable to Catholics having been made, Driscoll declared he was one of the despised people, half sure that his profession of faith would have him turned out of doors. Mrs. Dodge was indeed alarmed at harboring both an Irishman and a Catholic, whom she believed ready for any deviltry against good Protestants; but they had not the heart to turn him out into the darkness of a winter night. Colonel Dodge engaged him in argument and found him a rather formidable adversary. He learned for the first time that Catholicity had a strong case, of which he was utterly ignorant. When Mr. Driscoll went to his room for the night, Mrs. Dodge, in her alarm over what he might next proceed to do, watched him through the key-hole, and felt reassured when she saw him kneeling in prayer. The next morning the man, in departing, presented Colonel Dodge with Milner's *End of Controversy*, in return for his hospitality; he sent him later all the books he could lay hands upon, and never lost interest in the family until he had seen them every one in the bosom of the Church.

Mrs. Dodge accepted the faith first with her children, while her husband spent two years in study before he took the final step. When his resolution was taken he resigned his position as deacon, at a regular church meeting, and gave his reasons. The surprised and interested members argued the whole question out during the day, and when the meeting closed late at night

several good Presbyterians had made up their minds either to follow Colonel Dodge or to take up the study of the true faith. Bishop Hughes wrote an account of their conversion after his visit to the Dodge family : "The congregation consists of eighteen souls already received into the Church, and two who as catechumens are preparing for baptism. Nearly all are members or immediate relatives of the principal family, and when the first conversion took place the nearest priest was at a distance of sixty miles. Even at present they have no priest nearer than eighteen miles. The head of this family is a farmer of large wealth and property, a man of good education and strong understanding, who has been a representative of the county in the legislature. From himself and his excellent lady I had the account of their conversion, which I shall give as nearly as possible in their own words. But written words can convey no idea of the expression of spiritual joy and peace of soul which beamed on their countenances whilst they related it. . . . The sister and brother-in-law of Mrs. Dodge, their two daughters and son, and others of their neighbors followed their example, and embraced the faith, until at the period of my visit in July last they were in all sixteen who had adjoined Protestantism and been received into the communion of the Church.

"Colonel Dodge has fitted up a private chapel in his house, separated from the parlor by folding doors, and the priest visits them to say mass and administer the sacraments occasionally on a week day. There they have their altar, adorned and decorated in the richest manner that the resources of the country will allow. Silver candlesticks, a very neat ivory crucifix, fine white linens, and beautiful fresh flowers at the foot of a small picture of the Blessed Virgin, constitute its decorations. Evening and morning the family assembles before this altar and unites in the prayers

and devotions of our holy religion ; but when the priest comes, their joy is complete. Colonel Dodge throws his rooms open and invites all his Protestant neighbors to attend. ‘And,’ said he, ‘in spite of their prejudices, they are forced to acknowledge themselves struck with a feeling of awe in witnessing even the outward ceremonial of the holy sacrifice and the profound attention of those who assist at and believe in it.’ I had but a few hours to spend with them, the journey going and returning the same day having been thirty-six miles. I hardly spoke ; I listened in silence, and with secret emotion, wishing my own heart to share in all the feelings of faith and joy which I saw abounding in theirs. I was reminded of the first Christians. They appeared and spoke as persons who, by a special grace of God, had been put unexpectedly in possession of the heavenly treasure and who were still in the freshness of their joy and gratitude.”

A daughter of the family afterwards became a Sister of Charity and died at Mount St. Vincent’s in 1893. In the same community, later, was found the daughter of the Cazenovia merchant through whose chance visit the Dodge family won the grace of the faith. This gentleman married a second time, and died in Syracuse at the hearty age of eighty-three, greatly respected and loved for his fine character and his beautiful faith. The Catholic novelist, Mrs. Dorsey, made the conversion of the Dodge family the theme of a story named “The Story of the Flemings.” For a long time the incident remained rather obscure for various reasons, and it is only at this date, when all the actors in the drama have passed away, that full details have been made public. In New York City a notable event was the reception into the Church in March, 1840, of Rev. Maximilian Oertel, a Lutheran minister of high standing in his sect. The efforts of the reigning king of Prussia

to unite into one body the Lutherans and the Calvinists had driven the former into voluntary exile in large numbers. Their descendants are very numerous in the Northwest to-day. Mr. Oertel was sent to America to look after the emigrants, and during his stay here made a study of the Protestant conditions generally. The indifferentism and the dissensions of the period threw him into doubt as to the truth of his position; he began to study the religious question anew, and closed his study by entering the Church under the instruction of Rev. William Quarter. Later he established a German paper, the *Kirchen Zeitung*, and for many years did good service in the propagation and defence of the truth.

The Catholic body in the New York diocese made friends rapidly and held them in spite of the strong and very natural prejudice against their religion. While their voting power accounted for their esteem with the politicians, and their usefulness to the general industries made them acceptable to employers, there existed among the thoughtful a profound respect for their religious devotion. The sacrifices which the poor made in order to build the church and maintain the priest, the steady attendance at mass and other public devotions, the generous charity which they exercised toward one another, the utter lack of harsh feeling towards the Protestant neighbor, their delight with a country which they had admired long before they entered it, their deeper admiration when its freedom was contrasted with the tyranny at home, the cheerfulness peculiar to their social life, all impressed the observing native; and when, in addition, the examination into the doctrines of the faith led to the discovery of the lies and slanders which passed as history of that faith among Protestants, the reaction was sufficiently strong to lead to conversions like that of the Dodge family. These would have been more numerous

but for the social penalties inflicted upon converts, who lost relatives, friends, position, career and public esteem in following their convictions. However, the people whose courage failed them did very much to defend and encourage Catholics in their struggle for an equal chance in the Republic.



Church of St. Nicholas

CHAPTER VIII

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE KNOWNOTHING PARTY



Monsignor McMahon

WHILE pleasant and natural relations existed between the Catholics and their Protestant neighbors, and were steadily cultivated by the prudent and tolerant leaders, a different set of men, strangers to the new spirit of toleration, jealous of the strength shown by the Catholic body, began to stir up opposition, and to advocate such measures as deprivation of the suffrage and of the power to hold public office for all adherents of the Pope, and the exclusion of all Catholic emigrants from the Republic. The pioneers in this movement were the members of a society whose character is fully described by the fact that three Governments, England, Canada and the United States, did what was possible to destroy it during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and succeeded.

The Orange society was snuffed out of existence with contempt. Its career began in the county of Armagh, Ireland, in 1795, and increased so rapidly among rich and poor, and achieved so promptly a reputation for dastardly attacks on the person and property of Catholics, that the English Parliament dissolved the grand lodge of Ireland in 1813. To carry on its business an English lodge was founded, and in 1827 the Duke of Cumberland, of the royal house, accepted the office of grand master. With this impetus its mem-

bership ran up to two hundred and fifty thousand, particularly among the officers and soldiers of the army. Recruiting agents were sent out to all countries where the English language was spoken, and they won a large membership both in Canada and the United States. Their history from first to last abounded in riots, murders and burnings; and they crowned their career by starting a conspiracy to place the Duke of Cumberland on the English throne. The reports of this conspiracy led to Parliamentary investigation, which sentenced the Orange association to death in 1840. The lord chancellor of England laid down the rule that no member of the society should be admitted to any commission of the peace; when the Prince of Wales visited Canada in 1861 he refused to receive the representatives of the society or to recognize them in any fashion, and the association at once lost its power.

Its agents had established a lodge in New York City when Bishop Connolly was alive, and in a parade on the twelfth of July, 1824, in the village of Greenwich, the Orangemen committed outrages against the Catholics of so wanton a character that the magistrates of the day, after the pleading of two lawyers like Emmett and Sampson, both Protestants, sentenced the rioters to the proper fines and imprisonment. Rioting has never become a characteristic of the American people, and it is quite safe to say that the disturbances of the years from 1835 to 1855 were for the most part carried on by the Orange agents. The granting of Catholic emancipation in 1829, by the Duke of Wellington under the stimulus of O'Connell's agitation, while it struck the first serious blow at Orangeism, served to arouse the members to greater activity.

The literature of the days preceding emancipation teemed with denunciations of the Catholic religion and its adherents.

Much of this stuff was reproduced in America. A campaign of vilification was carried on against the Church. Catholics everywhere celebrated the removal of disabilities in England, and the names of O'Connell and Wellington were mingled in praise by Catholics and Protestants. Bishop Dubois held a solemn ceremony in his cathedral, and received the felicitations of the leading citizens; but the falsehoods spread by the Orangemen had done work too effective for the good will of the wise and tolerant to dissipate. An Episcopalian editor was able to write in the *Philadelphia Church Register* of the act of emancipation signed by George IV: "We shall be sorry for this measure if the revival and dissemination of the trumperies and delusions of popery are to be the result of it"; and later, "The lion, who lies in his den pining with famine or wasted and weakened with disease, unable to raise his feeble limbs against even a helpless lamb, is still a lion, and with returning health and vigor will recover his wonted ferocity, and wait only for occasions to evince it." A specimen of the books sent out against the Catholics was a story entitled *Andrew Dunn*, a reprint of an English story, which gave the history of an Irish boy from the day a priest horse-whipped him for questioning Church doctrine up to his reception into the bosom of Protestantism after overthrowing the theologians on all points. Bishop Hughes replied to it in another story, *The Conversion and Edifying Death of Andrew Dunn*, in which he made the hero a Protestant and carried him through a course of doubt until he arrived safely in the Church of Rome. Both *Andrew Dunns* had great success, and gave birth to a polemical fiction which enjoyed a long and profitable vogue.

Feeling had reached such a pitch after O'Connell's success that a minister of the name of Rev. Dr. Brownlee, in New York, was enabled to found a Protestant association somewhat on Orange

lines, and to establish a journal as the exponent of its views, called *The Protestant*. Dr. Brownlee had all the qualities of his kind, and his journal teemed with repetitions of the lies and slanders familiar to English history and controversy for three centuries. He did very much to lay the foundations of that Knownothingism which became a political party twenty years later.

The social and political leaders of the time did their utmost to keep the peace, with the exception of John Jay and his particular circle, who remained to the end consistent advocates of political disability for Catholics. The Whigs and the Democrats were the leading parties, and both sought the immigrant vote. The Democrats found greater favor with the naturalized citizen, because of their more liberal spirit in the matter of the suffrage; they had abolished or much reduced property qualifications for voters, and had resisted the Federalist attempt to extend the time of residence before a foreigner would be allowed to vote. Jefferson's generous spirit towards the common people and his faith in them were hateful to the aristocrats among the Federalists and Whigs, as they are hateful to the same class up to the present moment. The Irish immigrants became intense Democrats owing to the favor shown to them by the Democratic leaders, and the Whigs and all their successors have never been able to win them from that allegiance. The Orangemen and their allies naturally joined the other parties. Apart from these there existed a good number of native Americans who looked with distrust on the immense power and privilege given to immigrants within five years of their landing on the soil. They feared ill consequences, without regard to the creed of these people; but the fact that so many of the immigrants were Catholics intensified their natural dread. A longer probation, twenty-one years' residence, was advocated for

the citizen-elect; also his complete exclusion from office; and by degrees the party of Nativism began to formulate its principles. In the course of time they formed an alliance with the Orangemen and their supporters, and added to the program such principles as would reduce the Catholic citizen to social slavery, if they could be worked into legislation.

In the period up to 1825 the Catholic emigrants to New York State were mostly Irish, who brought with them from their native country a great knowledge of the Republic, profound admiration for its success over England, and true affection for its principles, whose working was clearly visible and wholly beneficent in their own case. Free labor, good wages, the right to vote, the privilege of buying or taking up land, decent treatment as human beings, flattering treatment as citizens, were theirs without question or hindrance. They had suffered incredibly from the absence of these blessings in Ireland, where they were mere slaves of the soil, persecuted, harassed, and kept in desperate poverty. These people became more American than the Americans, and knew how to appreciate the blessings of civic freedom far better than the natives, who had always enjoyed such blessings. They looked up to the Fathers of the Republic as to the saints, kept the national holidays with a fervor that surprised all, and took the oath of allegiance to the United States with a fervor the deeper that they were asked to forswear allegiance to King George, for whom they had no loyalty, no feeling except hate. They became Democrats by instinct, not by persuasion. They swore by Andrew Jackson and wasted no praise on John Quincy Adams, and no bribe of money, place, or favor could win them from the party founded by Jefferson. John Bach McMaster, the historian of the American people, studied the original documents to small purpose when he could write of the Irish that though naturalized they were not

Americanized, that our history, our principles, our welfare concerned them not, that they cared nothing for our great events and days, and that they cast a united vote in behalf of whichever party would buy it at the highest price.

On the contrary their leaders were among the first and most accurate commentators on our institutions. Bishop Kelly of Richmond examined and denounced our religious corporation laws, and lost promotion to the See of New York in consequence. Bishop England wrote and spoke magnificently, as only a man of his training could do, of our Constitution, and was more confident of our future success than some of the Fathers. Truer Americans than these poor but happy immigrants, prouder citizens, more appreciative, more affectionate and faithful, could hardly be found. Their first errors sprang from their imitation of the weak points of their American employers. They would have American independence in everything, and a few undertook to manage Church affairs in the sectarian style, where the members are all and the minister and the doctrine short of nothing. In politics they showed the devotion of the clan to its chief, pure affection, in which happily interests did not suffer on account of their loyalty. The majority of American Catholics remain Democrats to this day in consequence of this unparalleled devotion. Against these devoted Americans the crowd, marshalled by Dr. Brownlee, joined hands with the Orangemen, the sworn subjects of the King of England, the sworn foes of his foes, to work them as great harm as possible. Such was the beginning of Knownothingism, and its factors were three : Orangeism, ignorance and honest dread of foreign influence.

An era of ill-feeling toward Catholics began, which took the form of universal petty persecution. The old kindness which led to such scenes as the dedication of the New York cathedral, when

mayor and aldermen walked in the procession, entirely disappeared. The few who dared to keep up kindly relations had to suffer from the bitter reproaches of their friends, like Mr. Gouverneur Kemble of Cold Spring, who was denounced for contributing to the building of the Catholic church in that town. The persecution took many forms. When misfortune sent a Catholic to the poor-house or a Catholic child to the orphan asylum, both were shut off from the practice of their faith forever. The priests were not permitted to enter a public institution to administer the sacraments to the dying, to instruct the children, to gratify the inmates with religious comfort. The power of the State was thus used to further the spread of Protestantism. In some cases where the priest demanded entrance, and enforced his right with threats of legal proceedings, artifice was resorted to that he might be driven off.

In the almshouse of a Connecticut town, for example, a Catholic woman, a Mrs. Brown, lay dying, and the missionary priest of the district presented himself at the institution and asked to see her. He was a forceful, aggressive man, well known and not to be trifled with; the matron received him very kindly, but assured him that the dying woman had become a Protestant and had no wish for his services; and as she offered to conduct him to the dying woman, so that he might see for himself, he was deceived by her apparent candor, and departed. At the next station in the neighborhood he announced the apostasy of Mrs. Brown to his congregation. Later the poor woman died and was buried in the potter's field, and the matron of the almshouse spread industriously the report of her conversion; when, to her confusion, some inmates of the almshouse gave out the true facts, how she had vainly tried to pervert the woman, how Mrs. Brown had cried and prayed for the priest until the breath left her, and how the matron had boasted of her trick on the priest. The

matter was investigated, and justice was done the faithful old woman, whose remains were taken from the potter's field and placed in consecrated ground.

Incidents of this kind were common. Not only were Catholics shut out of public office, but all positions of worth were closed against them, except the most menial occupations ; and these were granted with insult, while many ministers argued that Catholics were unfit by nature for anything better. In many towns, districts and factories Catholics would not be employed at any price, and their application for work brought them only insult. Criminals of Catholic faith were refused the rites of their Church, and made to feel a double degradation. In time social equality failed even the wealthy and well-born Catholics, so bitter became the feeling against them. The children in the common school were neglected by the Protestant teacher, and often beaten by the scholars out of pure malevolence, whether Irish born or of Irish parents, or remotely of Irish blood, and their blood mattered nothing if they were Catholics. The result of this universal persecution was to chill the Catholic emigrant's hearty affection for the natives ; he was driven back upon himself, into a sort of ghetto ; he brought up his children and his grandchildren apart from the natives, taught them they were Irish, and gave them a scorn of the Yankees.

When the hate of the bigots took the form of proselytism, and the Catholics saw their orphans sent by the State into Protestant families, their paupers forced into the Protestant Church, their children tempted everywhere by soup-kitchens, and bribes of every sort to apostatize, indignation reached its climax. The very means adopted to reduce the number and the influence of the Catholics served only to intensify the faith, which burst forth into all the forms of charity, the free school, the orphanage, the home, the refuge, the hospital, in order to defeat the gospel of the bribe.

The public evidence of Catholic growth irritated the bigots to displays of violence. The burning of St. Mary's Church in 1831 was undoubtedly the work of a bigot, although no charges were made and no investigation ever took place. Feeling ran too high at the time, and the authorities bore with the wrong rather than make bad worse. Examination showed that the church had first been robbed, the bell tied up to prevent its being rung, and the building set fire to in three places, but nothing could be done to save the church with the wretched fire department of that period. When work was begun on St. Joseph's in Greenwich village, a hotbed of Orangemen, the men of the parish had often to guard the work at night lest the truculent should destroy it before morning; and great precautions had to be taken in all the churches against robbers and incendiaries. Rev. Felix Varela tells in his letters of a projected attack on the cathedral in Mott Street, which was prepared for secretly by tearing up the streets in the immediate vicinity, and manning the church and the graveyard with armed men, so that the van of the attacking force ran into these signs of a warm reception and withdrew in haste without disturbing a soul. The splendid seminary which Bishop Dubois had begun at Nyack was burned to the ground shortly after its opening. For some time Dr. Brownlee preached his usual sermons in that territory, and the result, while not directly to be attributed to him, could be traced to his malign tongue. In many places fires were discovered and extinguished in the nick of time. In Lansingburgh a convert, Mr. Keating Rawson, saw the monument which he had erected to the memory of his wife utterly destroyed.

It is almost impossible to conceive at this date how universal and irritating had petty persecution become, and how the Catholics had to fight in every direction, not for their rights as citizens or natives, but for the merely animal privilege of living in peace

among themselves. Their leaders defended them publicly and heartily. Father Varela of Transfiguration Church sent out tract after tract in attack and rebuttal, preached and lectured with the same design, and accepted on one occasion a public discussion with a minister, in a gathering presided over by Dr. Brownlee, where his success was so pronounced that Brownlee had to persuade the meeting the priest had not stated the true Catholic doctrine and would be disciplined by his bishop the next day. Vicar-general Power in *The Truth-Teller*, Father Pise in the *Expositor* and Fathers Schneller and Levins in *The Register*, called the bigots to account for their misrepresentations.

The regrettable result was the widening of the breach between the Catholics and the Protestants at the very moment when they were coming together in the bonds of patriotism and neighborly affection. The forerunners of the Knownothings in due time found themselves in the predicament of all public romancers; they had no evidence to offer in support of their charges against priests, nuns, doctrines, and the Catholic people in general; they had descended to obscene publications and lectures in order to hold the public, but these had rather awakened disgust and denunciation; the leaders of political life with few exceptions detested them for the trouble they made in politics as well as for their personal worthlessness; and it was felt that something should be done to round off and pinnacle the mass of printed and spoken language hurled at the public for almost a decade. Maria Monk came to the rescue and, while reviving the dying treasury of the Protestant Association, secured for herself and her abettors, Brownlee, Morse of telegraph fame, the Harpers of the once famous publishing house, and several ministers, an enduring but not an enviable ill-fame.

The movement to crown the work of Dr. Brownlee's asso-

ciation with fadeless glory began with the publication in the year 1836 of a book entitled "Awful Disclosures of Life in a Convent, by Maria Monk : Howe & Bates : New York." The preface disclosed the nature of the book, which was the now too familiar story of the escaped nun. "It is hoped that the reader of the ensuing narrative will not suppose that it is fiction, or that the scenes and persons that I have delineated had not a real existence. It is also hoped that the author of this volume may be regarded not as a voluntary participator in the very guilty transactions which are described ; but receive sympathy for the trials which she has endured, and the peculiar situation in which her past experience and escape from the power of the Superioress of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery in Montreal, and the snares of the Roman priests in Canada, have left her. . . . It would distress the reader should I repeat the dreams with which I am often terrified at night ; for I sometimes fancy myself pursued by my worst enemies ; frequently I seem as if shut up again in the convent ; often I imagine myself present at the repetition of the worst scenes that I have hinted at or described. Sometimes I stand by the secret place of interment in the cellar ; sometimes I think that I can hear the shrieks of helpless females in the hands of atrocious men ; and sometimes almost seem actually to look again upon the calm and placid countenance of Saint Frances as she appeared when surrounded by her murderers."

After this favorable beginning Maria Monk detailed her life before entering the convent to become a nun. She was the daughter of Scotch parents and was born in Canada. While making her novitiate she became infatuated with a man, ran away and married him ; in three weeks she fled from him and returned to the convent, where she finally became a professed nun ; and thereupon she was initiated into the various crimes committed

by the sisters, all infamous, and culminating in the murder of the nun called Saint Frances, who was smothered and stamped to death by five priests and several nuns, by order of the bishop of Montreal. The history was given with the utmost attention to details of place and time and circumstance, so that it had a fine appearance of truth. It was first printed in instalments in a popular journal in the autumn of 1835, and then produced in book form, much elaborated, in the early part of the year 1836. One Mr. William K. Hoyte, who posed on occasions as a minister, introduced Maria Monk to the ministerial circle of Dr. Brownlee. Her pathetic story interested the Rev. J. J. Slocum, pastor of a city church, Mr. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, and Colonel W. L. Stone, the proprietor of the *Commercial Advertiser*. Almost at once she became an international heroine, for the book sold by the thousands wherever the English tongue was spoken. It threw into the shade its most notorious predecessor, *Six Months in a Convent*, by Rebecca Reid, an escaped nun from Boston; the popular nunnery fiction of the time, such as *Louise*, or *The Canadian*, paled into meanness beside it.

Although Montreal seemed far enough distant to shut off inquiry from that direction, the news reached that city in a few weeks, and brought immediate and indignant protests from all classes of its citizens, Protestant no less than Catholic. The daily papers in English edited by Protestants denounced the book and its author in the most vigorous language. Said the *Herald* on October 20th, while the book was still a serial: "Though of a different religious persuasion from the priests and nuns, we have had too many opportunities of witnessing their unwearied assiduity and watchfulness and Christian charity during two seasons of pestilence, and can bear witness to the hitherto unimpeached and unimpeachable rectitude of their conduct, to be in the slightest

degree swayed in our opinion by a newspaper slander; but we would respectfully inform the *Protestant Vindicator* (of New York) that there never existed a class of men who are more highly respected and more universally esteemed by individuals of all persuasions than the Roman Catholic priests of Montreal. The Sisters of Charity are equally respected and are the means of effecting important services to the community." In fact the denunciations and denials of the Protestant editors became so numerous and emphatic, that Colonel Stone found his position as a sponsor for Maria Monk impossible, and he set out for Montreal with a copy of the book to examine the persons and places specifically described in the narrative.

The bishop of Montreal gave him permission to explore the convent described by Maria Monk; accompanied by Mr. Frothington, president of the Bank of Montreal, and Mr. Duncan Fisher, both Protestants, Colonel Stone examined every part of the convent, and all the persons concerned. He heard the testimonies of the people to whom Maria's career and character were well known, and the story of her downward career in particular; and upon his return to New York he made arrangements for the exposure of the imposture in public interviews with Maria Monk. Her ministerial friends refused to believe in the Montreal investigations and stood by the woman to the end. She had, however, to endure a public examination from Colonel Stone, who proved her guilty of such blunders as only an impostor could make. Then a second escaped nun was discovered by the name of Frances Partridge, who testified that she had been in the same nunnery and confirmed the story of Maria Monk. In the presence of six friends, ministers and laymen, Colonel Stone examined this woman, and proved her, in spite of the coaching she had received, as ignorant as her confederate of the convent whose mysteries they pretended

to reveal. The distinguished editor of *The Commercial Advertiser* felt it his duty to atone for his share in thrusting Maria Monk on the community, by publishing the result of his investigations in a book named *A Refutation of the Fabulous History of the Arch-Impostor Maria Monk*. Although it ended the imposture and flung the woman back into her native mud, some of her supporters could not part with the illusion, so profitable in itself and so fatal to Catholics; Rev. Mr. Slicer held on to the last, and wrote a book in defence of Maria, while not a few Protestant publications had the indecency to denounce Colonel Stone for his great public service in exposing the imposture. This eminent journalist lived and died a consistent Protestant, so that his testimony cannot be impeached on the ground of his being a Jesuit in disguise.

Meanwhile the *Awful Disclosures* had spread over the English world, and had thrilled its readers with creepy horror. The profits were so enormous that the promoters of the scheme began in their greed to fall out with one another, and at last the matter received a necessary airing in the courts. First the authoress brought suit against her publishers for a proper share of the profits, and the suit proved that Howe & Bates were mere tools of the Harper Brothers, who had not the courage to accept the responsibility of the book, nor yet the decency to refuse the profits from so rank a sewer. A second suit was brought against Maria and Rev. Mr. Slicer by one William K. Hoyte, who succeeded in having them held in the sum of five thousand dollars, until his claims for having written the book were satisfied.

By degrees it came out that Hoyte and Slicer were the prime movers in the fraud practiced on the public, and the full story of Maria Monk found its way into the journals of the time. She was the daughter of respectable people in Montreal, both her father and mother having been in the employ of the Government. The

father was dead when Maria began her career, but the mother was living and gave her testimony under oath as to the life led by her daughter, and the conspiracy in which she became entangled. Maria was weak in mind, and in morals, (one of those unfortunate children with an unconquerable impulse to sin. She became a street-walker at the earliest age,) and her only acquaintance with a convent and nuns came from attending a day-school in her tenderest years, and from her intimacy with a home for Magdalens. She fell into the hands of William K. Hoyte, who seems to have been a professed criminal masquerading at times as a preacher and again as a journalist. Having conceived the scheme he went about Montreal securing the proper testimony and matter for his plans, and in particular made a strong effort to get a declaration from Mrs. Monk that her daughter had once been a nun, or at least, the inmate of a convent. Although offered a hundred pounds on the spot, with the promise of more to come, the poor mother, honest and faithful, a good Protestant, refused the offer, and called in her pastor to deal with Hoyte and the two men who accompanied him, and who were introduced as ministers from New York. Having failed to secure a good foundation for his scheme, Hoyte and Maria went on without it, the book appeared in due time, supported by the good will of the most respectable men of the city, and won its financial success before the exposure of the criminals led to their downfall, and finally shut off the sale.

As a matter of fact it was never shut off entirely. The endless refutations and exposures have gone on until this day all over the world, but thousands read the *Awful Disclosures* still. The dishonest and impure among the advocates of irreligion bring out regular editions of Maria Monk's book seventy years after the event, as if it were a gospel of good tidings to the world. No one can measure the evil which it has wrought. Maria herself went

back to her evil life when the day of prosperity had waned, and lived until 1849, when she was sent for the last time to Blackwell's Island for robbing a man in a Five Points resort, and died before her sentence had expired. Her supporters sank back into their original swamp, and men like Morse were glad to forget their alliance with such infamy, when experience and the cultivation of honesty had raised them above their former level.

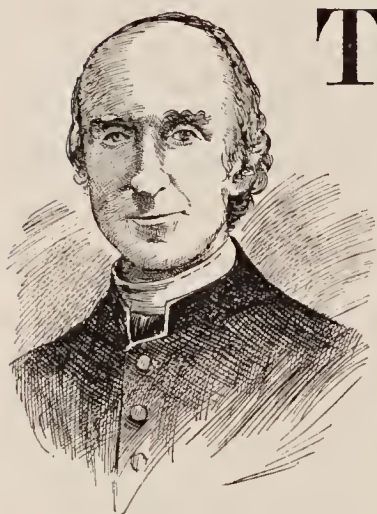
The book did its work well, and was the chief factor in the development of the spirit which created Knownothingism. Where a thousand read the *Awful Disclosures* one man read the *Refutation* by Colonel Stone. The imitations of the book glutted the market. The persecution of the Catholics increased in extent and virulence, and provoked the inevitable response. Workmen fought at the bench, children fought at school, mothers wrangled on the doorsteps, church meetings were annoyed by dead cats and stale vegetables thrown by hoodlums, editors wrote bitterly of the encroachments of Romanism, the whole country was thrown into a state of irritation and unrest which had to culminate in catastrophe. The inhabitants of Sullivan County drew up a petition to Congress which expressed not only their feelings but the feelings of the majority of the nation, in which they asked that the right to vote be denied to Romanists, and that State officers be appointed to inspect monasteries, convents and other institutions managed by Catholics.



Old Church of St. John the Evangelist

CHAPTER IX

THE CHARACTER AND CAREER OF ARCHBISHOP HUGHES



Rev. William Everett

THE fourth bishop of New York, John Hughes, was a providential man. When he took charge of the diocese in 1840 a crisis had come in American affairs as well as in ecclesiastical conditions : colonial simplicity had given way to the beginnings of that complexity with which we are familiar ; questions of all sorts had risen, and done away with colonial placidity ; the canal, the steamer, and the railroad had created new needs, new conditions ; emigrants were pouring into

the country by the hundred thousands ; speed had become an element in development ; old parties had vanished before the mere rush of events ; and the American citizen had not advanced with his times ; he clung to old methods and standards and prejudices, and against the swift current of change he raised old barriers, doomed to be speedily swept away. One of these barriers was the political movement called Nativism, aimed at the emigrant ; another, Knownothingism, aimed at the emigrant and the naturalized citizen ; and both attacked the very existence of the Catholic Church in the Republic. The great principle of toleration, adopted unwillingly by the American colonists, not at all understood by either leaders or people, was now to be tested, and the Catholics were selected by common hate as the victims of the test. They had been endured when few and helpless, endured because of

the friendly relations with France and Spain; now they were looked upon with distrust and hatred, because their numbers increased by immigration, their bishops, priests, churches, convents were everywhere, and their votes were in demand with the politicians.

The Catholics, though numerous, were scattered and almost leaderless. The bishops and priests, acquainted as they were with the dangerous temper of the bigots, carried caution and reserve to the point of timidity, in dealing both with their own people, and with non-Catholics. The leading laymen, such as had influence with all classes, were too often quite Protestant in their spirit and methods, a fact well proved in the maintenance of the trustee system. They were able only to criticise their pastors. When work for the Church was needed, they found that prominence in this matter affected their favor with Protestants. James Gordon Bennett could write of Bishop Dubois in this fashion September 9th, 1836: "Bishop Dubois is not a patriarch—he does not effect reforms by example, or by pastoral advice and government. No, no. He is doing Catholicity a service as the devil did Job a service, by his want of all example, by his entire misgovernment, by his capricious and ridiculous tyranny. . . . The conduct of Bishop Dubois has long given offense to the Catholics. Capricious, tyrannical, heartless, old-womanish and absurd, he has reduced and is reducing the standard of Catholicity to a standard that would make Maria Monk pity it, and Dr. Brownlee say prayers for its safety.") The tide of feeling against the Catholic body had been rising steadily from the first appearance of the Orange Society in 1824, and the body was not prepared to meet it, undecided as to the best means to meet it. Bishop Hughes removed indecision within a year. Before the close of 1841 he had brought his people into line for the conflict, and had made his position fully known to friends and foes. It was a remarkable achievement.

The prelate was an Irishman born, who had been educated in Maryland; he had seen several years' service in the diocese of Philadelphia, and as pastor in that city had acquired a valuable experience, and developed the qualities of a public man. A powerful speaker, a forcible writer, a hard worker, a student of his times, and magnetic in his personality, he became the idol of his flock and the friend of Protestants high in social and political life. He was a thorough American, a firm believer in American institutions, at a time when their value and solidity were still matters of debate; in behalf of his faith he took the public platform in stirring discussions with Protestant ministers; in the public press his letters had been numerous in defence of his people and their doctrines. When he became Bishop of New York he had won the reputation of an aggressive and successful champion, and was known as a strong man, and a hard hitter in controversy. His appearance matched his repute as a leader, for he was of the middle height, well-built, erect in carriage, and easy and graceful in movement. He had a large head, and handsome face, with Roman nose and prominent features, keen gray eyes and brown hair. Affectation and pomposity were never seen in him, but the leader showed in his perfect self-command, absence of embarrassment in any company, or in any circumstances. His manners were gentle and kindly, almost familiar with his intimates; only in his written utterances, caustic, biting, powerful, did the sterner qualities of his character betray their presence.

As we have seen, almost his first move was to seize Trusteeism by the throat and strangle it. He gave it no time to recover from that first blow, and in the first synod which he held in the summer of 1841, rules were given for the holding of Church property which ended it forever. The different boards of trustees surrendered, with the exception of the parish of St. Louis in Buffalo. This held

out long enough to prove that the old régime was dead. The editors of the time took note of this invasion of rights by a Roman prelate, and attacked him on very poor grounds. Bishop Hughes replied to their attacks in a public letter addressed to "David Hale, Esq., who is a Congregationalist in religion; W. L. Stone, Esq., who is some kind of a Presbyterian; M. M. Noah, Esq., who is a Jew; and the editor, whose name I do not know, of a little paper called *The Aurora*." The document filled the Catholics with joy, for its combination of extreme and sincere courtesy towards opponents and of forcible reasoning left the editors water-logged on the controversial sea.

The secret societies of the period had proved themselves malicious and formidable; not the Freemasons and Odd Fellows, but Irish societies of a factious sort, generally made up of men from the same county in Ireland, and breeders of riots, drunkenness, and even murder in some places. They were oath-bound, and the synod denounced them, and excluded their members from the sacraments. Bishop Hughes took pains to deal with the leaders of these organizations, and won from them the promise that the oath should be dispensed with, the social and beneficial aims of the societies pursued properly, and the spirit of faction as far as possible destroyed. Like his action on Trusteeism his denunciation of the secret societies was misunderstood, and the editors named above criticised him severely for his supposed animadversions on Freemasonry. James Gordon Bennett, as a Catholic, took the lead in these criticisms, and held up the bishop to public obloquy in the peculiar Bennett fashion. The *Herald* of May 12, 1841, spoke thus: "Bishop Hughes, from having been a good gardener, a raiser of cabbages and carrots, has become a bishop of the Church, and now tends souls instead of salads, but his original taste still exists. (He is one of the most fawning sycophants to

power that ever presided in the Church, and all those who have money and power, of any church, are his polar stars. He wants all manliness and independence.” On the twenty-ninth of October in the same year Bennett wrote : “Bishop Hughes, who from the highly respectable trade of raising cabbages (having been a capital kitchen gardener once on a day), became a raiser of Catholics and Christians, has the sole merit of originating this small potato question. He started the project a few years ago, in humble imitation of Daniel O’Connell and the ‘rint’, one of its objects being to organize the Irish Catholics of New York as a distinct party, that could be given to the Whigs or the Locofocos at the wave of his crozier.”

For six years Bennett kept up his attacks, pouring out, with the readiness and unscrupulousness of a blackleg, lies and slanders and abuse by the column, until the bishop thought the time had come to expose him. Evidently he had carefully read and clipped from the *Herald* for many years. Mr. Bennett was a liar of no ordinary capacity, and his lack of principle was marvelous ; but he did not possess a very good memory, and therefore contradicted himself in later years on most essential points. For instance he could write in 1844 : “We have never uttered a syllable against him (Bishop Hughes) as a private individual. On the contrary we have uniformly spoken of him as a man of talent, of most amiable character, of piety, of integrity, of untiring zeal for his Church and creed.” This offence against himself Bennett had committed so often that the bishop had no difficulty in proving him, out of his own journal, by the use of the deadly parallel, a rather despicable liar. In a series of letters to the mayor of the city and to Stone, the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser*, Bishop Hughes described at large the crimes and the character of Bennett with such effect that whatever shred of reputation he enjoyed with his generation was utterly destroyed.

A few sentences from this long and terrible arraignment and condemnation of "a dangerous and degraded man" will serve to illustrate the bishop's method. "The man himself I have never seen; but my opinion of him had been already formed by two circumstances which for me were quite enough. One was that he was understood, in Philadelphia I think, to have published private and confidential letters; another was that he seemed to deny and repudiate his country and countrymen. The first is the only service he could render to the land of Bruce and Wallace; and for the second there is another reason, no doubt, which his countrymen could explain. . . . Just imagine if you can an incarnation of demonism placing itself on the highways of civilized society—ranging with prying inspection around the whole circle of official, commercial, social and domestic life; just as the free-booter sweeps the horizon with his telescope, looking for prey; imagine that incarnation, rushing on its victim with some fatal secret of guilt or misfortune (the wounds of which might heal, if allowed the natural privilege of shade and silence); whispering that fatal secret with sardonic triumph into the ears of those who thought it was unknown, and then waving to and fro the scorpion lash of its infernal whip, until tears, or money, or both, are made to gush forth abundantly; and then you will have conceived my idea of the powers that may be exercised by a bad man having the command of a free press. You say Bennett is too contemptible for notice; then answer me the question, why is it that society sustains his paper? . . . Let society show a healthy tone of moral courage; let those who by mistake take up his paper in the morning wash their hands again before going to breakfast."

The demolishing of Bennett pleased the Catholics, especially as it was connected with the practical overthrow of the Native-

American movement in the City of New York, which had been gathering head for some years. The editor of the *Herald* had furthered the Native-American cause in various ways, and had drawn upon himself other punishment than that administered by the bishop. Some of the political leaders seem to have feared that Bishop Hughes would form a Catholic political party to meet the antagonism of the Native-Americans, and they charged him with cherishing that purpose; but the thought was very far from his mind, as it did not require more than ordinary sense to see that the Native-Americans were to be short-lived, and that all parties on similar lines were doomed to early death in the United States. The bishop contented himself with ordering his people to keep out of trouble, to attend no public meetings, and never to strike until their enemies made the first attack. His influence was strong enough to win the obedience of the people.

The excesses of the Native-American party in Philadelphia and other cities, where they burned churches and murdered Catholics with impunity, never having been called to account for these crimes, roused the New York faction to the fervor of riot. They elected one of the Harpers of Maria Monk fame to the mayoralty in the spring of 1844, and on the night of election twelve hundred of them, armed with canes and bludgeons, marched through the streets of the sixth and fourteenth wards, shouting insults against the Catholics. No one molested them. The astonished rioters had it in mind to attack and destroy the cathedral, but upon receiving information that the bishop had filled the church and the adjoining graveyard with armed men, rather eager to shoot at their enemies, they changed their tactics and went home intoxicated instead. Bishop Hughes was determined that not a church in New York should suffer the fate of the

Most Reverend John Hughes
1838-1864



Philadelphia churches. If the town officers could not defend the property of citizens, then the citizens themselves should defend it, even to blood. He did not spare the Catholics of Philadelphia for their supineness: "They should have defended their churches, since the authorities would not do it for them. We might forbear from harming the intruder into our house until the last, but his first violence to our church should be promptly and decisively repelled." When some timid city officials begged him to restrain the Irish, he replied: "I have not the power. You must take care that they are not provoked." During the period of excitement he had the churches guarded by armed men, and warned the Native-Americans that these guards would treat a mob in the only way suitable to its ferocity.

Just before Mayor Morris retired from office to make way for Mayor Harper, the Native-Americans planned a meeting for a certain day in the City Hall Park, at which they were to receive a deputation of their brethren from Philadelphia, bearing the national flag, trampled upon, it was declared, by the savage foreigners in that city during the recent riots. The aim of the meeting was purely to create a riot, and Bishop Hughes had the *Freeman's Journal* issue an extra, warning the Catholics to keep away from this meeting. Then he called upon the retiring mayor and advised him to shut off this demonstration.

"Are you afraid that some of your churches will be burned?" said Morris.

"On the contrary, I am afraid that some of yours will be burned," said the bishop. "We can protect our own. I come to warn you for your own good."

"Do you think, Bishop, that your people would attack the procession?"

"I do not," replied the bishop. "But the Native-Americans

want to provoke a Catholic riot, and if they can do it in no other way, I believe they would not scruple to attack the procession themselves for the sake of making it appear that the Catholics had assailed them."

"What, then, would you have me do?" said the cunning mayor.

"I did not come to tell you what to do," said the caustic bishop. "I am a churchman, not the mayor of New York; but if I were the mayor, I would examine the laws of the State and see if there were not attached to the police force a battery of artillery and a company or so of infantry, and a squadron of horse, and I think I should find that there were, and if so I should call them out. Moreover, I should send to Mr. Harper, the mayor-elect, who has been chosen by the votes of this party. I should remind him that these men are his supporters; I should warn him that if they carry out their design, there will be a riot, and I should urge him to use his influence in preventing the public reception of the delegates."

This fine attitude settled forever the question of disturbances in New York, and the metropolis went through this period and the later excitement of the Knownothings without street riot or the destruction of property. It was a narrow escape from bloody scenes, however, and when the crisis had passed the bishop took to his pen and lashed the guilty backs of Editors Hale, Stone and Bennett for their share in promoting public madness by their false charges, romantic lies and villainous hoaxes in their journals. He carried himself in the same manly and sensible fashion through the Knownothing period in 1854, urging upon his people the duty of restraint and indifference, feeling that the movement must wither speedily; and New York had no riots until the Knownothings faded away, not to be revived again for full forty years. He had now become archbishop and the idol of his people. Every

public act and utterance of his were scanned by friends and enemies, and given most undue emphasis. By his enemies he was generally misunderstood and therefore misrepresented. He had lively tilts with a gentleman named Brooks, a senator and a bigot, who used the LeCouteulx schism in St. Louis' Church, Buffalo, to help pass a ridiculous Knownothing bill against the Catholic tenure of church property, a bill which failed before it was born, and was killed finally in 1862; and the controversy was published afterwards under the title of *Brooksiana*, thereby securing for the obscure Brooks a kind of immortality. He paid his forcible respects to Horace Greeley on the subject of his own opinions, including in the attack Kossuth and several unwise Catholics who had publicly criticised his utterances.

To Horace Greeley he wrote at one time: "You have continued to manifest for some time past a great desire to know my opinions on certain questions of which I have said nothing, whilst you manifest great dissatisfaction with certain other opinions which I have expressed, or which have been imputed to me . . . you proclaim that 'it is a sad day for our country when a prelate so able and powerful as Archbishop Hughes is heard instilling into the minds of his flock distrust of, and aversion to, secular common schools.' In other words, it is a sad day for our country when Archbishop Hughes does not agree in opinion with Hon. Horace Greeley. . . . I have watched with moderate interest the movements that have been going on in the name of liberty throughout Europe within the last four or five years. . . . The convulsions which have taken place, contrary to almost all similar convulsions in past times, have not thrown up to the surface a single great man. There was a time when I thought that distinction was possibly reserved for Kossuth. . . . But when, on his release from prison, I found him offering the incense of adula-

tion to the god of British pride, . . . when I found him unnecessarily flinging insult at the religion of most of the people of Hungary, simply because such insult would be grateful in the ears of his English auditors, I could not help forming the opinion that the stuff was not in him, and that history would write him down, not among the heroes, but rather among the humbugs, of which this nineteenth century has been so prolific."

At the time of the New York draft riots Horace Greeley won a reputation for an anti-Irish feeling, which reputation helped to destroy him politically and otherwise in his run for the Presidency ten years later. He attacked Archbishop Hughes again and again, but drew from him only two letters in his own defence. Some amusing facts about Greeley came to light in this correspondence. "I was the means of preventing a riot in the city of New York, and Mr. Greeley, on that occasion, pronounced in his paper that better the streets of New York should flow with blood than allow the supposition that the civil authority was insufficient or indisposed to preserve order and to protect life and property, than that these results should be due directly or indirectly to ecclesiastical influence. Even now Mr. Greeley, by himself or his reporters, charges our present troubles upon the Irish; he says that all who have been arrested are Irish. No doubt the Irish are fit to take their share on the battle-field in defending their country; then they are also fit to be arrested and taken up as innocuous victims of our municipal laws. I was in New York when the first number of Mr. Greeley's paper was published. Its first theory was that all international quarrels might be settled with peaceful arbitration. This lasted for a time. But Mr. Greeley was an advocate for revolution in every other country; and having passed once through Italy he saw the country and of course, more or less, the people, through the windows of the vetturino;

and when he returned he published a little book on his travels, the amount of which was that the Italians were unlikely, if not unfit, to enjoy liberty, unless they could look down a cannon's throat, in which statement he imposed upon them a feat, the accomplishment or imitation of which no humane man would suspect Mr. Greeley to be capable of."

One by one the archbishop met and overthrew his foes or his critics in the controversial arena, and always as the spokesman of his people, the exponent of the Church, and the defender of that true and great Republic which has emerged from the colonial institution to help shape the destiny of mankind. He was far more American than the men of his day. He foresaw the end of Knownothingism at the very height of its power, foresaw the Civil War, foresaw its result, warned Seward of the hostility of Europe, instructed his people to become with speed thorough Americans in spirit, language and customs. Far ahead of his time, as every great man must be, he was misunderstood by the average outsider, but his people loved him, idolized him, obeyed him as the head of the clan; and the natural opposition, of which the elements were numerous in New York and in the country, never could make any head against him, never could form even a respectable company. The famous D'Arcy McGee tried opposition on Irish political grounds, and in his journal, *The Nation*, almost stooped to the scurrility of Bennett. He was wiped out in a day. In a letter on the short-lived Roman Republic of 1848, correcting the blunders and misstatements of Horace Greeley, the archbishop had the following paragraphs :

"I see also by the papers that a meeting of Irish Catholics is to be held to raise funds for the support of the Triumvirate (the executive of the Roman Republic). I predict that those who

will compose that meeting will not themselves contribute enough to support a republic fourteen feet square ; still, let them proceed. But depend upon it, the Roman Republic will replenish its exchequer much more effectually by melting down the chalices. I have a pretty good idea of what description of Irish Catholics will compose such a meeting—Irish Catholics *a la* New York *Nation*, who imagine themselves patriotic simply because they are not religious. Of course they will not contribute to the offerings which their Catholic brethren of all nations will present as a testimony of reverence, and as a means of temporary relief to Pius IX in the place of his banishment. But it is assumed that their absence from church will hardly be observed, indeed, their presence would perhaps excite greater surprise.” D’Arcy McGee found his career in New York cut off, and withdrew to Canada, where he rose to eminence and general esteem, and was slain in the height of his career by an assassin from that very group so caustically described in the above quotation.

So few are leaders of the Hughes type that struggling causes of all sorts reached out to him for the aid of his influence, of his pen, of his voice, of his gracious personality. He admired Henry Clay and his principles, and cast his only vote for him at the presidential election ; and Clay was pleased and honored, as he had the right, at this compliment, and when the archbishop called upon him during his visit to New York, and found him in his room at the hotel surrounded by the great men of his party, Clay turned them all out for an hour that he might converse with the foremost churchman and foremost citizen of his time. President Polk offered him a diplomatic mission to Mexico, through his secretary of state, James Buchanan, who said afterwards : “Independently of his exalted character as a dignitary of the Church, I believed him to be one of

the ablest and most accomplished and energetic men I had ever known, and that he possessed all the prudence and firmness necessary to render such a mission successful." His intimacy with Seward is well known, and the trust which Lincoln placed in him is as much a tribute to the wisdom of that great President as it is complimentary to the character of the archbishop. He visited France as the representative of the American Government, and in order to make his visit as useful as possible he accepted the delicate and thankless position of a volunteer diplomat. The American embassy at Paris resented his interference, as small things resent the great, and forgot patriotism in its own irritation. With the aid of the diplomatic corps, it failed to secure for the archbishop an interview with Napoleon III. He waited for action long enough to understand the situation, that no action would ever be taken by an embassy which his presence obscured ; and then he wrote directly to the emperor for an interview, secured it for the next day, had an hour's chat with the monarch and the empress, laid before them the American situation, blessed the Prince Imperial, and withdrew in triumph, to the intense disgust of the diplomatic corps, who were much angered at this violation of all diplomatic etiquette.

The pope, his supporters among the cardinals, such men as Barnabo and Antonelli, esteemed and valued him, as well they might ; for never has the Temporal Power had such a champion in the United States, never did the Holy See possess a more sincere and influential advocate of its rights than Archbishop Hughes. In their behalf he lectured, wrote, and acted before the American people like their sworn knight ; and so impressed were they by his powers that they had his sermons and other utterances translated into Italian and disseminated far and wide. In consequence all complaints against him, all criticisms of his career fell short at

Rome. \ Strange as it may appear to us in this day, his vivid utterances and prompt actions often excited a kind of terror among the other bishops of the country, who were mostly for a policy of quiet and caution and submission, and feared naturally the consequences of his boldness. They protested individually against nearly every important act of his public career, but their protests had only one ill effect—he should have been raised to the dignity of cardinal, the grateful Government suggested it, his services and his personality alike demanded it, the pope felt inclined so to honor him, but the protests of the timid prevailed, and the honor was withheld. He would have conferred distinction on the Sacred College, because by 1862 he had become a citizen of the world, \ his name was familiar and respected in the courts of that day, and in cabinets the value of his influence and his action came up for discussion with other world-forces of the time. His biographer Hassard seems to have missed the wonderful greatness of the man, and has given us rather the portrait of a strong-minded parish priest than of a splendid leader; probably because he was writing for a public that might grow irritable at the spectacle of a great citizen in the person of a great archbishop.

To read of his public activities alone one would judge John Hughes to have been a prelate of the Curia, like Antonelli, devoted simply to the public affairs of the Church; whereas he was at all times the bishop of his diocese, the executive, in touch with his people every moment, the creator of the diocese, of its educational and charity systems, of its financial methods, confessing, confirming, ordaining, dedicating, preaching and lecturing, collecting funds, the head and the inspiration of every movement, the legislator for new and strange conditions. His great influence with the people was based upon his labors in their behalf. His diocese

in 1840 embraced the States of New York and New Jersey, and for seven years he travelled that immense territory from Trenton to the St. Lawrence, from the Hudson to Lake Erie, transacting the ordinary business of his diocese. In 1847 he carved out of the territory two new dioceses at Albany and Buffalo, which relieved him of the entire north and west. In 1853 he cut off New Jersey and Long Island by establishing the dioceses of Newark and Brooklyn. When he dedicated the church of the Immaculate Conception on Fourteenth Street in 1858, he declared that it was his ninety-ninth dedication. At the date of Bishop Dubois' death the entire diocese had sixty churches, forty priests, and a population of two hundred thousand. In 1853, the same territory, now divided into five dioceses, had nearly four hundred priests, and New York alone had one hundred and thirty-five; people, teaching communities, and institutions had multiplied in proportion. At his death in 1864 his priests numbered one hundred and fifty, his churches and chapels eighty-five, and his fifty free schools, select schools, and academies taught ten thousand children.

The sole aim and the chief labor of a diocesan bishop is the sanctification of his people, and this aim, this labor, John Hughes never forgot, never for an instant neglected. He formed parishes and provided them with priests; he paved the way for the secure tenure of church property, and finally obtained the proper legislation; he organized the plan of church education; he encouraged the building up of the temperance and total abstinence societies; his share in the formation and support of the Irish Emigrant Society was large, and he had much to do with the formation of the State Board of Emigration; the religious communities were introduced by him, and set at the work of preaching retreats and missions, of caring for the orphans and the sick and distressed, of

educating the young both rich and poor ; he gave large encouragement to the religious press ; he emphasized to his people in all his sermons, speeches, lectures, and they were innumerable, the need of the Christian virtues before all things ; and he did not forget at the same time to impress upon them the absolute necessity of becoming American citizens in fact and form ; he condemned the tendency to build up a Little Ireland and a Little Germany, which has almost resulted in our time in the formation of a Little Europe in America ; he warned them of the other extreme, the adopting of a false liberalism, from which they had suffered so much in the evil of Trusteeism ; in fact, there was no point upon which he did not instruct them, warn them, appeal to them ; and their response, hearty, enthusiastic, universal, made him the great and influential archbishop of his time.

Naturally his faults were peculiar to his virtues and his success, but they are hardly worth recording. He was an autocrat from first to last, so positive in his convictions that he could hardly tolerate opposition of any kind. He rebuked the great Brownson for intimating that there might be a better way of presenting Catholic truth to American Protestants than the old fashion. He had a distrust of the priest who interested Protestant neighbors in his work, or who seemed to be on too familiar terms with them. "I do not like these Protestant priests," he said once, upon hearing the praise of a priest who had secured a large attendance of Protestants at his parish fair ; and the phrase found its way into later controversy. His greatest fault was neglect of his own health. With the physical constitution nature had given him, regular living and proper care would have carried him vigorously to the age of eighty-five ; but he thought of little besides his work, paid no attention to his meals, to his sleep, to regular air and exercise, to social pleasure among his equals. He simply worked until nature

failed him at the age of sixty-seven. Born on the twenty-fourth of June, 1797, he died on January 3, 1864, about seven o'clock of a Sunday evening; and so far had he overcome prejudice and impressed his people that the nation mourned the death of a great citizen and a great churchman.



Church of the Nativity of Our Lord

CHAPTER X

THE PEOPLE AND THE CLERGY



Orestes Brownson

DURING the administration of Archbishop Hughes the Catholic population rose from insignificance to importance, from the thousands to the millions throughout the country, thereby precipitating the innumerable and vexing problems which accompany the migration of a multitude. Emigration from Europe began on a tremendous scale. In the year 1846 the Irish who landed in New York numbered a little over fifty thousand; the next year the tide had risen to something over one hundred thousand; in 1851 the figures were two hundred and twenty-one thousand, two hundred and thirteen. The terrible years of famine in Ireland had paralyzed the nation, and the only alternative to death was flight to America.

All Europe was then politically disturbed. The Germans came in numbers; Italy contributed some thousands, largely of the revolutionary type; and Quebec, which rose in rebellion in 1837, sent its quota of defeated patriots, priests and people, sympathizers with one MacKenzie, after whom the rising was named. The Irish emigrants left in such numbers that every available ship was pressed into the service of transportation; there was no organization and little supervision; cattle are carried across seas in our time with less inhumanity than human beings were deported to America in 1848; and in consequence ship-fevers attacked the

unfortunates, who died by thousands in the harbors of Quebec, Montreal, and New York. The Canadian and American Governments, and private charity, did what they could for the unfortunates ; the English for many years seem to have concerned themselves only with the profits of this hideous traffic. Archbishop Hughes founded an Emigrant Society for looking after the Catholics landing in New York, and at a later date he gave his aid in securing the formation of an Emigrant Commission from the legislature. Two Catholic gentlemen who had much to do with the establishment of the Commission were Andrew Carrigan and John E. Devlin.

New York was the gathering-point for the majority of emigrants, although Boston and Quebec received their proportion. English vessels preferred to bring their human freight into English territory, and English laws favored this inclination. But from the harbor cities the emigrants spread to all parts of the country then open to settlers. Travel had become easy, the railroad had supplanted the canal in New York State, and work was so plentiful that laborers were in constant demand. The emigrants went wherever work and wages were most attractive. The cotton and woolen mills along the Mohawk, the iron industries, the building of new railroads, carried them north and west to the St. Lawrence and Lake Erie. Although Catholic emigrants, whether from Ireland, Germany, Italy, or Quebec were for the most part tillers of the soil, they did not become farmers in their new home. The need of money was too keen. Both in the city and the country they worked for wages. Farming was a second intention. When the railroad was built in a certain locality, the laborers settled in the neighborhood, and bought land or started business ; thus grew up the Catholic rural populations, and so rapidly, as we have already seen, that Archbishop Hughes was encouraged to carve

four dioceses out of the original one, and to place bishops in charge of Buffalo, Albany, Newark, and Brooklyn by the year 1853. The majority of the Irish remained in the East, the majority of the Germans sought the West, while the Canadians divided themselves almost evenly in the course of time between the East and the West.

It occurred to the thinking men of that period that more of the Irish should become farmers, and a western priest named Father Tracy went about lecturing on the benefits of settlement on farm-lands in Nebraska. The people interested in this scheme of colonization managed to hold a convention in Buffalo, and to give large airing to their personal views. At a meeting in New York City in 1857 Father Tracy and other speakers made most urgent pleas for a westward movement; unfortunately for them Archbishop Hughes attended the meeting unrecognized, and at its close delivered one of his most caustic and condemnatory speeches from his place in the gallery. He castigated Father Tracy for lowering himself to appear as the agent of scheming colonizers with lands to sell, and for entering his diocese on false pretences; since in asking for permission to say mass he had said nothing about his colonization scheme; he ridiculed the land-boomers on general principles, and described the dangers and hardships of pioneering to a people unprepared and unaccustomed to such work; he excoriated an editor present who had declared that the eastern clergy were opposed to a westward movement because it might depopulate their parishes; he denounced all such schemes, of which there had already been too many, but he did not object to that natural movement to the West carried on by individuals, which in time would settle the national domain; and he closed by catechizing Father Tracy severely, and refusing to accept his explanation and apology in defence of his own character. There were no further enterprises of this kind during his lifetime.

Of necessity for a long time the Catholics lived like close corporations, shut out by their faith rather than by their nationality from association with Americans of the Protestant faith, and partly shut off from one another by the difference of language. The Germans kept to themselves, and so did the Canadians, forming separate parishes wherever their numbers favored the plan. Owing to this exclusiveness these two sections of the household made slower progress in establishing themselves in popular favor. American life was a great novelty for the Catholics, brought up as they had been in circumstances so different at home, where Government meddled with everybody and everything, and taxed whatever could be counted property. In fact the first years of freedom bred wild disorder in some parts. The secret society was a favorite amusement with the Irish. In Ireland it had been a great danger, but also a popular method of teasing and frightening the Government. There was no restriction for secret societies in the United States, and they flourished for many years, particularly among the wild and irresponsible laborers along the railroads and canals. They were formed on slight excuse; one group representing the Far-ups, or southern Irish, another the Far-downs, or people from the north, a third the Corconians, a fourth the Connaught Rangers; some had a political complexion for the freedom of Ireland, others were mere tools of an ambitious leader; all were made the excuse of riots and other disorders, which ended in occasional murders and scandalous public trials. Archbishop Hughes put an end to them by denying the sacraments to their members, refusing Christian burial also, and by direct appeal to their more conscientious leaders to abolish the oath, and to control the evil tendency to public disorder. Intemperance flourished for a time. Intoxicating liquors sold very cheaply at that period, and the liquor business was one that needed little capital, and

met with ready encouragement. It was in fact one of the very few lines of business not closed to the Catholic emigrant by public prejudice. The clergy fought the vice of intemperance with great success, and succeeded, not only in diminishing its ravages, but in affixing to the saloon business a stigma which remains to this day, although in Ireland and England and other European countries the keeping of a public house carried with it no disgrace.

Great stress was laid upon these disorders not only by the bigots but by injudicious Catholics, mostly journalists with the combative temperament. In the *American Celt* of September 24, 1856, the editor, in commenting upon a prize-fight which had just taken place near the city, said: “. . . Ireland . . . has here and on the Pacific coast the discredit of swarming the great cities with a horde of hardy and vulgar ruffians, unmatched in any former state of society. Most of these young wretches are young men, born here or in the English manufacturing towns, of Irish parents. Such was the notorious Sullivan, such was the Kelly in the last tragedy. Surely, surely, some one has a terrible account to give of our neglected first and lost second generation in the English and American cities.” Archbishop Hughes took the editor to task at once, pronouncing his comments “at the same time insolent and untrue.” He denied all the charges about the first and second generation, and stamped the editor as infamous. The exaggerated language of such journalists had again and again been copied into Irish journals to the manifest injury of the bishops and clergy of America, who were charged with neglect and desertion of their flocks by reckless and malicious writers. Strangely enough this mischievous exaggeration, which began with the letters of an Irish priest against Archbishop Carroll, have never ceased up to this moment. Travellers and agents of all races, Irish, German, French, Austrian, Italian, have slandered the American bishops

and clergy in every decade for the real or supposed leakage from the faith ; when they should have found only praise for labors utterly beyond their own ability and charity.

The migration of many millions from Europe to America was a work of no small magnitude. After the frightful dangers and sufferings of the journey across the sea, there remained the troubles of settlement in the strange land. The mortality of the emigrants was appalling at the best of times. The bishops and priests and laity of seaport towns had to build hospitals, refuges, and orphanages in a night, and to call upon the benevolent societies to succor the destitute in the tenements. Governments on both sides of the water did nothing but look on complacently for a long time, and the critics never thought of lending a hand to aid the departing or the arriving emigrant. Fortunately work was plentiful in the State, and the charity of Catholics was not lacking in heroism. The earlier settlers had developed an aristocracy of wealth, refinement, and efficiency. To these was added that part of the emigration which was composed of professional men, merchants with capital, and master mechanics ; people of substance, who could lead in a community. It has been the practice to look upon the European inflow as purely of the peasantry, whereas it brought with it a very respectable percentage of the educated and monied classes, who were shrewd enough to see the fair prospect in the United States. This aristocracy, old and new, gave the people the proper leadership.

Such families as the Devereux, Lynch, Kernan, and McCarthy families, whose names are quite familiar to us, were simply representatives of a numerous class, settled throughout the State from the Battery to the St. Lawrence. The descendants of the old Spanish and French merchants were still powerful in society and in finance. There were lawyers, physicians, journalists, teachers,

professors, architects, merchants, and politicians by the score, and some of them were most eminent and influential in their day. Patrick Sarsfield Casserly represented the ancient pedagogue, he had composed educational books of value, and his son became senator from California in after years. He stood for Trusteeism in the time of Bishop Dubois, but like others at the coming of Bishop Hughes he saw a great light and surrendered his heresy. Thomas O'Connor edited *The Shamrock* for many years, and saw his son Charles rise to the first place at the American bar. He had his heresies also to atone for, but he lived long enough to see the success of his great bishop, and to acknowledge that his course had been justified. The great lawyer of that time was John McKeon, aggressive, terrible, and successful, the friend and adviser of the archbishop, a strong, positive man. His encounter with James Gordon Bennett, for whom he cherished a vigorous scorn, was one of the incidents of the time. A very popular writer and journalist was John Augustus Shea, a poet of no mean power. D'Arcy McGee shone for a time as the editor of *The Nation*, and James A. McMaster won a reputation for ability and other things as editor of the *Freeman's Journal*. Orestes Brownson established his famous *Review* in the metropolis, and was long a famous and venerated figure in Catholic life, undoubtedly the greatest mind in America, but deprived of public honor because of his conversion to the Catholic faith.

In political life Catholics had begun to win success even before the death of the archbishop. John Kelly found his way to Congress in spite of the Knownothing storm, and faced Sam Marshall, Knownothing representative from Ohio, on the floor of Congress. Marshall, for some days, had been thundering against the Pope and the Catholics, when Kelly made up his mind that a halt should be called. William English, whose seat was near Kelly's, advised

caution, as Marshall was a noted fire-eater and duellist. John Kelly had a reputation for courage also, and he proved it on this occasion. After securing the usual permission to interrupt the orator, he declared to the House that the gentleman from Ohio was uttering untruths against the Catholics and their faith, and knew his own utterances to be untrue. Mr. Marshall, in a rage, approached Mr. Kelly, and in a low tone demanded if he meant to call him a liar, and Mr. Kelly answered in the same key, that Marshall knew he was not speaking the truth. The incident made a sensation, and the political circle was on the *qui vive* for a duel for some days, yet nothing came of the affair, no challenge was issued, Congress adjourned shortly afterward, and Samuel Marshall went home and died not long afterwards. A few years later John Kelly recalled the matter to the famous Tom Marshall, and stated his wonder that Sam had not challenged him to fight. "It was never in his mind," said Tom Marshall. "Sam had to get to Congress and he could get no nomination except from the Knownothing crowd ; when he was sent here he had to do something for his constituents, and the only thing to do was to make fiery speeches against the Pope, but he hated the whole mob, he knew he was lying, and he wasn't going to shoot a decent man for their sake and for telling the truth."

One has only to read the press letters and addresses of Archbishop Hughes to learn that the people of that day held strong opinions of their own on all matters, and defended them stoutly even against their powerful prelate. The Young-Ireland leaders, who had escaped English prisons by flight, formed a coterie with D'Arcy McGee as their leader and mouthpiece. They charged the Irish clergy with having been the destroyers of the Young-Ireland movement ; some of them went so far in their admiration of liberty as to raise funds for the Roman Republic, and warned

Archbishop Hughes to collect and send his contribution to the exiled Pope as secretly as possible, which resulted naturally in securing from Dr. Hughes his most open and damaging denunciation of them and their methods. In his *Review* Dr. Brownson advocated the presentation of Catholic truth to the American non-Catholics in a manner better suited to their mental condition with regard to Catholicity, and more in harmony with their national customs. He was promptly criticised in an article on the condition of the Catholic press, but with sincere regard for his great ability, fine character, and valuable service to the faith.

Some critics were for making the native-born children as Irish or as German as their parents in order to keep them in the faith; they also were unsparingly denounced, and instructed in the duties of Americans to their native country. The strife of opinion concerned methods rather than principles or doctrines, and led to active but not serious collisions. The people were too busy striking for foundations to engage in useless disputes. Their rise to fortune was very rapid between 1855 and the close of the war. The majority had fixed seats, wandering in search of labor was ended, churches and schools had multiplied, and the strongest arm of the Church, a clergy, faithful, laborious and pious, and close and dear to the people, had been formed.

To form such a body had been the most necessary and first work of Bishop Hughes. His predecessor had failed in this point, failed even to establish a seminary. At the death of Bishop Dubois the entire State had forty priests. When the dioceses of Newark and Brooklyn were formed there were nearly four hundred. Here was an achievement in itself, brought about in the short space of fourteen years. For the most part they were Irish by birth and education, but all nationalities were represented by one or more priests. Germans, Italians, Belgians,

Austrians, Hollanders, Englishmen, Frenchmen and natives sprung from all these races. They had been educated everywhere, not a few in the best universities of the Continent. The bishop picked them up wherever he found them willing to work in his diocese. Young students applied to him often, who were unable to complete their education at home for want of means; he placed them either in Mount St. Mary's or in his own seminary at Fordham, and ordained them as soon as they were properly prepared. He must have bent all his energies towards this work to win such success in so brief a time. His seminary for the training of young clerics was erected at Fordham, and Rev. Felix Vilanis was its first rector. The next year, 1841, he opened a college on the same grounds, and placed it in charge of Rev. John McCloskey and a very respectable faculty, among whom was Maximilian Oertel, the former Lutheran minister, as the teacher of German. The second year there were thirty seminarians and fifty collegians, and by 1845 a new building was begun to meet the growing demand for entrance. The locality was charming, a small farm on the banks of the Bronx, now familiar as the site of the Jesuit college, St. John's. Bishop Hughes paid for it thirty thousand dollars, and spent much more in improvements and new buildings. In Revolutionary days it had been known as Rosehill; a daughter of the famous Lord Stirling had dwelt there, and the beautiful elm trees for which it is still noted were said to have been raised from seeds of Queen Mary's Holyrood Park.

In the course of time the institution was handed over to the Jesuits, but as this arrangement proved unsatisfactory the archbishop gave up the property to the Jesuits for a consideration, broke up his seminary for a time, and sent the students to different institutions, until, in conjunction with the other bishops of the province, he secured a site in Troy for St. Joseph's Provincial

Seminary. The closing of the seminary developed considerable feeling among the clergy against the Jesuits, but the archbishop absolved them from any indiscretion in the matter. He wrote to a friend that he thought the good of religion required him to close the institution for a time. "I shall proceed immediately to the erection of another, but not in a way to be of the slightest umbrage or annoyance to the Jesuit Fathers. And I will say more, that if I had been a Jesuit at Fordham I could not have helped wishing the diocesan seminary to be removed from the grounds of that beautiful location. They know this themselves, for I told them. Everything has been transacted between us in an amicable and charitable manner." Nevertheless, the diocesan seminary, after an exile of nearly forty years, returned to the same neighborhood at Dunwoodie. This institution provided the entire province with at least half the clergy; the remainder were adopted from other dioceses, or educated in Montreal, Niagara, Allegany, Emmettsburg, Baltimore, Paris, Louvain, and Rome. In the Papal city an American college was founded in 1859, to which every bishop that could afford the expense sent one or more students. Besides the diocesan clergy, the Jesuits, Redemptorists and Paulists added their quota of members, undertaking not only the work peculiar to their communities, but also the direct administration of parishes and the chaplaincies of hospitals, prisons and refuges.

From the failure of the Knownothing movement the clergy gave signs of a definite character as a body, such as belongs to any body of men trained in the same school and engaged for years in the same labor. In some respects they were superior to their successors — more inventive, more characteristic, less devoted to routine. Their work demanded of them originality and variety. It was their office to organize the people, to find the funds, to build

Printed by the Government Printer, Wellington.
1894.

St. Joseph's Seminary at Troy
1890



the church and school, to invent or adapt ancient methods to new circumstances, to fight every one's battle in the forum, and to keep their people pious, faithful, holy, against a multitude of strange temptations. Their devotedness and their success won for them great affection and respect from all classes, and especially from their own. They were positive characters, quite as positive as their archbishop, and while they admired him for his energy and true greatness, they rejected his opinions when distasteful to their own prejudices. Most of them were intensely racial in their feelings and methods; the German would bring up his people as if in a German province beside the Rhine; the Irish priests held even to county divisions, and taught their people to be Irish as against the disliked Yankee; even the native children were taught to look to Germany, Ireland and Quebec as the fatherland. In vain did Archbishop Hughes denounce this importation of foreignism. Another generation had to pass before his teachings could be appreciated. The native priests followed him of course, but he did not like the lengths to which they pushed his own principles. He referred to some of them as "Protestant priests," and avowed his dislike for their views and methods. Some feeling and discussion arose from these differences, which might have been spared. The great current of American life has swept them all away into the necessary limbo.

Father John Power of St. Peter's represented the old guard of the clergy, and died, still young, in 1849, at the age of fifty-two, a handsome, polished, eloquent and popular priest, whom the people and the clergy would have preferred as bishop even to Hughes, for he had learned the ways, somewhat tortuous, of the Catholic elite, and he knew and loved the people well. In fact only his death finally softened the hearts of the clergy and the people to Bishop Hughes, who had made him his vicar-general,

treated him with respect and consideration, and preached his funeral sermon with such effect as no other preacher could command at that time.

Yet it is unlikely that Father Power would have wrestled with the problems of the hour as did Bishop Hughes; he would have tried to carry on existing methods smoothly, and Trusteeism, with its brood, would have had time to grow, to become strong, and to intrench itself in custom. With all his popularity and address Father Power could not save his own church from the mismanagement of the trustees. It was sold after proceeding in bankruptcy, and Rev. William Quinn was appointed to the pastorate in order to build the parish anew. This Father Quinn was indeed a character. Although still young, he had proved himself a good manager. He had none of the charming qualities of Father Power; he was severe, brusque, a hater of shams, a strong partisan, and a thorough business man. Nevertheless he was an upright and able man, and rose to eminence, becoming vicar-general to Cardinal McCloskey, rector of the cathedral, domestic prelate, and successful director of diocesan finance. He was actually appointed Archbishop of Cincinnati, it is said, to lift it out of financial failure, but the cardinal persuaded him to refuse the honor and the burden. He did not live long after the cardinal, passing away while journeying for his health in France in 1887.

St. Stephen's parish was founded and directed for many years by Dr. Jeremiah Cummings, a native of Washington, and a graduate of the Propaganda, where he made a distinguished course. A good linguist, a fair musician, æsthetic in his tastes as well as American to the core, he made his church most attractive by the beauty of the services and the quality of the choir, so that strangers flocked to it; and at the same time by an amusing cynicism of speech and a contrariness of views he became the critic

of clerical life, saying the things and doing the things which irritate and flout popular opinion. He was as positive as his bishop, but more polished in his expression. At first they did not get along well, but later Dr. Hughes made him a member of his council and took his advice in diocesan matters. He died in 1866, after a long illness. A contemporary was the pastor of St. Bridget's, Rev. Thomas Mooney, who accompanied the Sixty-Ninth regiment to the war as its chaplain; another was the pastor of St. Columba's, Father McAleer, who went bravely through the cholera plague, with great honor to himself and his order in the '40s; a third was Dr. Ambrose Manahan, chaplain to Ward's Island, clever and accomplished, born to great things, but never arriving, except in his book called *The Triumphs of the Church*, in his power as lecturer, and in his charm as a conversationalist. The clerical writers were not many, and received no encouragement to literary production; but they were characteristic men, and made up for popular indifference by the free use of satire. Besides Fathers Pise and Varela, already mentioned, Rev. James Cummiskey, a brother of the publisher, devoted much of his time to the production and spread of good books.

Rev. Theodore Noethen, who died pastor of Holy Cross church in Albany in 1879, was the author of a general history of the Church, two volumes of Sermons, and translator of Goffine's *Instructions*. He was a native of Cologne, Germany, and was studying in Rome when he met Dr. Manahan, who had a general commission from Bishop Hughes to secure priests for New York wherever he could find them. The young man was adopted for the American mission, studied English in Fordham for a time, and was then sent to Buffalo to the Germans; for eight years he ministered to his people from Buffalo to Syracuse, enduring much from the wretched trustees of that day; in 1850 he became pastor in Albany, later vicar-

general, and was a welcome figure in the clerical circle, where his fine voice, appearance, and agreeable personality, made him a fine representative of his race.

The convert priests of the time were a notable body of men. The Barbers, father and son, belonged to the Jesuit community; the Paulist community, which made its beginning in the time of Bishop Hughes, presented a remarkable array of clerics in Fathers Hecker, Hewitt, Baker, Walworth, and Young; while among the diocesan priests, Fathers Forbes, Everett, and Preston had striking careers. (John Murray Forbes had been a Protestant minister, and after becoming a Catholic and a priest, and acting as pastor of St. Ann's for some years, returned to his old faith and died in it. Bishop Hughes was shocked but not surprised at his perversion, for he had discovered that "he was influenced by the desire of honors, ease, emolument, and distinction, which it was impossible to afford him.") Rev. John Everett was a man of sterner build, who had enjoyed experience of the world as business man and physician, before he accepted the faith and entered the priesthood; and his long career which ended as pastor of the Nativity in New York in 1898, was marked by great devotion. Father Preston rose to high honors under Archbishop Corrigan, and maintained throughout his life a dignity and rectitude that won his neighbors, and edified his people.

For several years Rev. Alexander Mupiatti acted as assistant for Father Varela; an Italian Carthusian who came to New York in search of health, and remained to edify the people by his devotion to the sick and the dying; he was commonly regarded as a saint. Another Italian was Rev. Father Olivetti, a man of great ability, good-looking and talented, who planned to colonize the territory around Lake Champlain above Whitehall, and actually introduced several hundred families into the Adirondacks; he was robbed

and murdered one night on the dock at Port Henry after landing from the steamer; and although the authorities took cognizance of the crime no steps were taken to seize the murderer. The colonies which the priest had established languished and died. Father Francis Von Compenhoudt followed him in the Champlain neighborhood, a Belgian of great originality and force, who died afterwards near Syracuse. He was the forerunner of the modern missionary to non-Catholics. Travelling all over the State, and not remaining more than one or two years in a parish, his first action was to bill the town with printed invitations to his lectures on the chief doctrines of the Catholic faith. He had commanding power over audiences, and always made converts, besides interesting and establishing his own people more firmly in the faith. The Hollander, Rev. Peter Havermans, acquired a national fame by his long life and his steady labors in the city of Troy, where he was pastor for fifty-four years. He had been a Jesuit, working in Maryland, and having withdrawn from the order was on his way home when Bishop Hughes met and persuaded him to join his diocese. He had a passion for work, which never left him until his death in 1897 at the age of four-score and ten; and he had a large share in all the good works in Troy and its vicinity, seminary, hospital, refuge, academy, and school.

The percentage of failure and loss among the clergy seems to have been no more than normal; sickness and strain from overwork and exposure were frequent, and too many died in the middle age. The records show them to have been strong men, though not cultivated on the average, as both time and means were wanting to secure a thorough education. The people supported them handsomely, believed in them, and followed them with pathetic faith; and their confidence was not misplaced or betrayed. While the faith of the people edified their Protestant neighbors, the

devotion of the priests to the people edified still more; it was seen that the plague had no overpowering terror for the priest, nor the poverty of his people, nor any distressing condition. The virtues of the clergy and the people half a century ago burned like sweet incense in the Republic.



Fordham Church

CHAPTER XI

THE GROWTH AND FORM OF PARISH ORGANIZATION



Mother Agnes O'Connor

AFTER 1853 the diocese of New York received its present shape, which includes the counties of New York, Richmond, Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Ulster, Orange, Rockland and Sullivan. The territory extends from Staten Island north to the city of Hudson, about one hundred and ten miles, and from the state line of Connecticut westward about seventy miles. It

must have seemed mere luxury to administer so small an area after managing a diocese which included the entire State and the better half of New Jersey. The unit of organization was the parish, the great necessity of the hour was the priest to administer it. The majority of the emigrants who remained in the East preferred to live in the City of New York, and the problem of church-building was felt there most severely. With all his efforts Archbishop Hughes never succeeded in providing the people with enough churches and priests; none the less his actual success was wonderful.

In 1840 the Germans started a parish and a church on the west side of the city with the title of St. John the Baptist. In 1841 the parish of St. John the Evangelist began its career in the old Jesuit college on Fifth Avenue; in 1842 an addition to the cathedral was dedicated, the churches of St. Andrew and of the Nativity dedicated, and the parish of St. Vincent de Paul begun. A former

Protestant church had been converted into a Catholic hall, which was used for important public meetings of the priests and people; and finally it was turned into a parish church and named St. Andrew's. The church of the Nativity had also been a Protestant temple until bought by the Catholics. The visit of a distinguished French bishop to the city, Mgr. Forbin-Janson of Nancy, led to the erection of the parish of St. Vincent de Paul. Finding the French residents of the town rather indifferent in religious matters, he gave them a mission, suggested the scheme of a parish, and led the way in organizing the members, and in raising the necessary funds, to which he contributed some thousands of his own private fortune.

The Redemptorists built their church on Third Street in 1843, and the Franciscans the church of St. Francis on West Thirty-First Street in 1844, both chiefly for the Germans. From the parish of St. Joseph was cut off in 1845 the parish of St. Columba, West Twenty-Fifth Street; in 1847 the Redemptorists built the church of St. Alphonsus, and the churches of St. Stephen and St. Bridget's were begun in 1848, their territory being taken from the parishes of St. John on the north and the Nativity on the south. The church of St. Francis Xavier on West Sixteenth Street opened in 1851, St. Ann's in 1852, and in 1853 the church at Melrose, the new Transfiguration on Mott Street, and the Annunciation in Manhattanville, at which last dedication the papal delegate, Archbishop Bedini, officiated and Dr. Cummings preached. Holy Cross Church on West Forty-Second Street was opened in 1854, and in the same year St. Lawrence's in Yorkville. The seminary church at Fordham was converted to parish uses in 1855 with the title of Our Lady of Mercy. St. Michael's parish began in 1857. The year 1858 saw the erection of four churches, two for the Germans, the Assumption and St. Boniface, the Rosary at Calvary

cemetery, and the Immaculate Conception on East Fourteenth Street. St. Gabriel's began its existence in 1859, and in the same year Archbishop Hughes delivered the sermon at the cornerstone ceremony of the Paulist church and convent. St. Augustine's at Morrisania and St. Joseph's on West 125th Street opened in 1860, the new St. Michael's was dedicated in 1861, and an old Protestant church was converted into St. Theresa's on Henry Street in 1863. By the end of his career the archbishop saw forty churches or more in and around the see, in addition to those built in the more distant counties. If not adequate to all the needs of the increasing population, they were at least sufficient for the circumstances. The money for building them was obtained chiefly from the people themselves, and partly from the generous donations of the charitable abroad ; from such societies as the Propagation of the Faith, and the Leopoldine of Austria, which made a splendid record for themselves in the American mission alone.

Once the spirit of Trusteeism was rooted out and a method of tenure of church property found, the churches and parishes increased rapidly. The evil spirit, however, endured longer than the form in which it lodged. The bankruptcy of St. Peter's in Barclay Street killed the form, and the success of Rev. William Quinn, the pastor, in paying off the entire debt after the bankruptcy, helped to banish the spirit. The titles of three bankrupt churches were vested in the bishop, and he adopted the method of having the titles to newly-acquired lots for churches and schools recorded in his name, but all properties actually in the hands of trustees remained undisturbed. He enacted laws in his first synod to curb the trustees, and to end all danger of bankruptcy. All lay persons or trustees were forbidden to appoint, retain, or dismiss any person connected with the church, such as sexton, organist, singers or teachers, without the consent of the pastor ;

they were not to have meetings on church property without the pastor's consent; they were not to withhold the money needed for the support of priest and religion; they were not to vote any money for contracts or special matters without the pastor's consent, and even with his consent they were not to expend more than a hundred dollars, unless they applied to the bishop. The method and practice thus introduced became in time the basis of the law which later was to regulate the tenure of Catholic Church property.

The Knownothing period led to the presentation of a bill in the New York legislature whose purpose was to annoy the bishops and to harass the Catholics as much as possible, and the influence behind it was the board of trustees of St. Louis' Church in Buffalo. They had once been overthrown by Archbishop Hughes, but revived sufficiently to create a last great scandal by conspiring with Knownothings against their own Church. The bill provided that no conveyance of property in trust to a person in ecclesiastical office or his successor should vest title thereto in such person or his successor; that all dispositions of property for religious purposes, unless made to a religious corporation, should be invalid; that on the death of a bishop Church property vested in him should pass to the incorporated church using the property; if the church were not incorporated, the property should go to the State for the benefit of the parish, which should then incorporate. In spite of the protests of those most concerned, the bill became a law, but its provisions were never carried out; they were too difficult; and moreover, the Knownothing party died the next year. A law whose basis was founded on justice and the facts succeeded it in 1863, when the existing mode of managing church property, as established by Dr. Hughes, was recognized by law; namely, all parish property was to be held by a board of trustees,

properly incorporated, consisting of the bishop of the diocese, his vicar-general, the parish priest and two lay trustees. Under this law no difficulties have so far arisen to hamper the natural growth, or to divide and distract the people.

The churches of this period were for the most part of the simplest character. Architecture and ornamentation were rarely considered, and when they were the results did not commend themselves to the best taste. The old Protestant churches made over new were not models of beauty in any order—a rectangle of great severity with a Greek portico—yet they were not lacking in dignity. The Church of St. Brigid represented an honest attempt at architecture, with its façade and two towering steeples; Renwick, one of the architects of the new cathedral, drew the plans for St. Stephen's; St. James' had a Grecian front ornamented by a bell-tower; and the Redemptorists put up on Third Street a very fine example of the Byzantine church. For fine altars the clergy sent to Italy when they could afford it; for fresco and other ornamentation there was no lack of foreign artists; for sacred vessels and vestments France was the depot. It was made clear that the taste of the future would be evenly divided between the Gothic and the Roman styles in church and in ornament. When the archbishop took up the question of a new and imposing cathedral worthy of the see, he decided upon the Gothic. This temple was the very crown of his church-building, and its inception alone would have stamped him as a man of foresight and imagination. He chose for its site what was then the wilderness, just as Father Kohlmann chose the wild spot on Mott Street for the first cathedral half a century previous. People laughed at the idea of building a grand central church on Fifth Avenue at Fiftieth Street; and the laying of the corner-stone in 1858, a splendid ceremony, with seven bishops, one hundred and thirty

priests and an audience of one hundred thousand, was not looked upon with enthusiasm. The work went on for two years until the money collected had all been spent—seventy-three thousand dollars. By that time the foundations were laid and the work had reached the water-table. The rest was left to his successor.

Around the church the people gathered, and here they found their sanctification and their spiritual progress. The Sunday mass and vespers, the Saturday confession, and the special devotions of different occasions formed the staple of their religious life. They were fond of long sermons, and the clergy never failed them. At fixed intervals the pastor provided a mission or a retreat, at first preached by any priest who could be secured, then given over to the orders. Parish societies were formed for special work, among which the most popular were the sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, in honor of whom the members practised special virtues and went weekly to the sacraments. A special guild looked after the needs and the ornamentation of the altar; another of elderly people paid due regard to the devotion of the rosary, and generally contributed to the society for the propagation of the faith; some parishes conducted a library and looked after the distribution of good books; not a few had societies for the children, although their wants were thought fully supplied by the teaching in the catechism class, and the special preparation for the first reception of the sacraments.

The instruction of the young in their religious duties was intense but hardly original or attractive, unless in the church schools. In the good old fashion the catechism was hammered into them, rather than taught. The most important societies were those devoted to temperance and total abstinence, which flourished chiefly among the Irish. Other nationalities could not understand them. Father Theobald Mathew, the Irish crusader

against the drinking habit, made temperance and total abstinence popular, and undoubtedly these virtues were much needed. Yet the emphasis laid upon them at one time gave the Irish a reputation for the vice of drunkenness, which they did not deserve. Other races, like the Scotch, the English, the Germans and the Hollanders, drank quite as much, and often more, but they made less noise about the quantity, and stirred up no temperance movements. The temperance societies were very popular, and the movement did much good, but having gone beyond its proper orbit, in time it fell to pieces.

Societies for young men and women, outside of the sodalities, did not prosper. Their usefulness was long a question, and led to some curious expressions of feeling. The intensity of the racial spirit kept the Irish and the Germans apart, and the prejudice of the natives shut both out of American life. The native-born children were brought up as Germans and Irish, but at the same time, being of a different temperament from their parents, were looked upon with some suspicion. Studying the position for themselves they found this anomaly: brought up as Irish or German they were not admitted into the inner circle of the elders; natives of the country, they were rejected by Americans. In time although the more numerous, the more American by birth and training, they learned that their birthright was being withheld by the leaders, and they rebelled mildly. They maintained that the hope of the faith of the Church for the future rested with them; their elders declared that only a steady supply of Europeans, Irish or German, would keep the Church alive in America.

Brownson gave expression to native feeling in this fashion: "When the end we have to consult is not simply to hold our own, but to advance, to make new conquests, or to take possession of new fields of enterprise, we must draw largely upon young men whose is the future. These Catholic young men, who now feel that they

have no place and find no outlet for their activity, are the future; the men who are to take our places and carry on the work committed to us. We must inspire them with faith in the future, and encourage them to live for it. Instead of snubbing them for their inexperience, mocking them for their greenness, quizzing them for their zeal, damping their hopes, pouring cold water on their enthusiasm, we must renew our own youth and freshness in theirs, encourage them with our confidence and sympathy, raise them up if they fall, soothe them when they fail, and cheer them on always to new and nobler efforts. Oh, for the love of God and man, do not discourage them, force them to be mute and inactive, or suffer them, in the name of Catholicity, to separate themselves in their affection from the country and her glorious mission ! Let them feel and act as American citizens ; let them feel that this country is their country, its institutions their institutions, its mission their mission, its glory their glory.”

This plain language, which seems so natural and ordinary to-day, stirred up much feeling. Archbishop Hughes confessed his inability to understand what the great Brownson was driving at ; he thought the young men were receiving every encouragement to reach the highest ideals ; it was a mystery to him by whom they were hindered from their share in the work of the gospel ; and he could not, in his long experience of forty years, find any circumstances which would justify the intensity of the editor. In a long article on the Catholic press he sharply rebuked both parties, Europeans and natives, for raising an issue which should not exist ; they were all Catholics and Americans, and they must work together on that platform ; he would have no extremes, no Europeanizing or Americanizing. In a private letter to a friend, explaining the wiggling which he gave to the partisans, the essence of the matter came to the surface. Speaking of the convert editors,

whose actual position he never understood and had no sympathy with, he said: "As they became more numerous and more acquainted with Catholics, especially young men born in this country, they imagined themselves an auxiliary corps to aid the bishops and clergy in propagating the Catholic doctrine among the Protestants of the United States, whom they professed to know by heart. Their general idea for the accomplishment of this was a combination of lay elements to aid indirectly in the work of the ministry. Their reliance was principally on 'the press'; but in connection with it on 'associations'; which they have tried and which have all failed, viz.; 'Catholic library associations,' 'Catholic lecture associations,' and last and least profitable of all, 'Catholic clubs.' I did not especially approve of any of these, but I gave permission for the several experiments from which they anticipated so much benefit to religion." The young men did not get their opportunity then, nor later; a quarter of a century had to pass before the full meaning of Brownson's words reached the general conscience. Nevertheless all the methods of lay co-operation in the spread of the gospel which the archbishop looked upon with distrust are nowadays mere matters of necessary routine.

With the church built and a priest in charge the next step was to erect a parish school. Education of the young became a crucial problem very early in Catholic development, chiefly because the Protestants showed an extreme determination to use the common or public school as an engine of the Lutheran gospel. They believed that the salvation of the country depended upon Protestantizing the Catholics, and since the constitution of the State did not permit missionary work through the State offices and officials, and assured any faith free development according to its nature, the Protestant citizens proceeded to use the State indirectly in a large scheme of proselytism.

Wards of the State, orphans in the public asylums, patients in the hospitals, the poor in the almshouses, criminals in prison, soldiers in the army and sailors in the navy, were deliberately robbed of their faith where possible, shut out from the practice of it at least, and urged and tempted in every way by State officials to become Protestants. However, as this class of citizens was not of importance, and also because the fruit of their labors was not great among the unfortunate, the Protestant party turned to the public school as the best engine for warring upon the faith of Catholics. In the beginning sufficient State aid was given to the Church schools to support them very comfortably. St. Peter's in Barclay Street thrived under State aid, a fact which led to the speedy withdrawal of the subvention after a time. While the schools of the country districts had one form of administration the city schools had another. The legislature named the schools which were to receive State aid, and among these schools were many supported by religious corporations. The Bethel Baptist Church corporation was discovered to be misusing its funds for education, and the discovery led to a change in the method in 1824. The Church schools were deprived of State aid, and the greater part of the State money went thereafter to the Public School Society of New York, an incorporated body of citizens deeply interested in the proper education of the young, and incidentally in perverting Catholic children.

By the year 1842 when disaster fell upon it, this society had under its control one hundred schools in the city; and while it disclaimed all wish to proselytize, even numbering a few Catholics among its trustees, its text-books and its teachers were alike insulting to all things Catholic. The bishop in consequence urged his clergy and people to build their own schools where they could. Yet to provide for the ten or twelve thousand Catholic children

was impossible, both from lack of funds and of teachers. It was then determined to petition the board of aldermen for a proper share of the school-fund, to which Catholics contributed a good share, and of which they got nothing. The petition asked that "your honorable body will be pleased to designate, as among the schools entitled to participate in the common-school fund, upon complying with the requirements of the law, and the ordinances of the corporation of the city, or for such other relief as to your honorable body shall seem meet, St. Patrick's School, St. Peter's School, St. Mary's School, St. Joseph's School, St. James' School, St. Nicholas' School, Transfiguration School, and St. John's School." The petition was rejected after a public hearing which stirred up the greatest excitement. The Protestant ministers rallied to the defence of the sacred fund upon which they relied for the spread of their creeds among Catholic children, and their denunciations of "Bishop Hughes and his attempt upon our free institutions" were loud and bitter.

The month of September, 1840, was wholly taken up with the spirited debate in the City Hall between Bishop Hughes on one side and the entire force of ministers and lawyers on the other. For a time the school question disappeared before that greater question, the progress of the Catholic Church in the United States. The adverse decision was not announced until January, 1841, and in the meantime the Public School Society, fearing for existence, proposed terms of compromise, such as expunging from the school books all traces of anti-Catholic teaching. On the other hand the Catholics, refusing the terms, proposed a compromise: they promised to appoint to their State-supported schools only such teachers as passed the examination of the Public School Society, to leave their schools open to State inspection at all times, to conform to the requirements of the law, to adopt the

same plan as the Public School Society, to teach no doctrine during school hours, and to teach nothing against the particular creeds of the sects. Compromise came to nothing, and the contest was carried to the legislature at Albany. It had become clear that under no conditions could the Catholic schools hope to receive State aid. Therefore the original movement was directed against the very existence of the Public School Society. Governor Seward took up the matter, conferences were held with Horace Greeley, Thurlow Weed and Bishop Hughes, and finally, in April, a bill passed the legislature which extended to New York the provisions of the general law in regard to schools, and the Public School Society passed away peacefully in 1842.

Two notable incidents of the two years' agitation were the putting up of an independent ticket for senators and assemblymen by the Catholics, in order to punish the regular nominees who had all agreed to vote against any change in the school system, and the smashing of Bishop Hughes' windows by a mob on election day. The agitation had not accomplished its first aim, the securing of State aid, and the Catholics had to take up the double burden of building their own schools and paying their share of the public school taxes. They had only one school-building at the time, St. Peter's; all the others were in the basements of the churches; besides poor accommodations, teachers of ability and training were lacking. Such teachers as had the necessary qualities and virtues ran their own schools, in which they made money, enjoyed a fine patronage, and lived on the surface of the earth, not under it. Bishop Hughes thought he had four or five thousand children in the Church schools, poor as they were; very few attended the public schools, because school-going was not a habit in those days; and the private schools, which were numerous, may have educated a few thousand more children.

The great need was teachers, and only nuns and brothers could work at the salary paid by the parishes. It was long before the religious communities could be induced to settle in the New York diocese in such numbers as to be of use in the Church schools. The pastors had to depend upon poorly paid lay teachers. The work of building a church so taxed the financial strength of the community that some of the priests declined to approach the school problem. Dr. Cummings of St. Stephen's started a school in the basement of his new church, found it practically impossible to meet expenses, and solemnly marched his children to the nearest public school, where he had made arrangements for their admission; greatly to the disgust and indignation of his bishop, with whom he lost favor entirely, being as positive and candid a man as the bishop himself. Had the Protestant teachers in the public schools been more kindly and less ready to insult the faith of Catholic pupils, the education question would have been delayed many years. The Protestant determination to use State institutions for the abolition of Catholicity suffered no abatement by the defeat and destruction of the Public School Society.

The religious communities began to appear slowly after the force of the Native-American movement had spent itself. The Brothers of the Christian Schools were brought out from France in 1848 to teach the children of the French parish of St. Vincent de Paul, and by taking English-speaking novices were soon enabled to take charge of boys' schools. The Sisters of Charity taught pay schools in the parishes of St. Patrick's, St. Mary's and St. Peter's, and free schools in the two last named. In 1857 the School Sisters of Notre Dame opened a school in the parish of the Holy Redeemer. The Ursulines had an academy for girls in Morrissania in 1855. The Christian Brothers opened an academy in Manhattanville in 1853, and converted it into the famous

Manhattan College in 1863. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart opened a boarding convent for girls in 1841, which developed finally into the well-known convent at Manhattanville. The religious communities helped materially to solve the school problem; as fast as they could furnish teachers the clergy and people built parish schools, and by the close of the archbishop's life his diocese could make a very respectable showing on the point of free education. The financial difficulty could not be entirely overcome, but men like Rev. Father Clowry, the founder of St. Gabriel's parish in East Thirty-seventh Street, found ways to lighten the burden. A distinguished convert of the period, Prof. Henry Anderson of Columbia, gave the new parish nine lots for its undertaking. On these lots Father Clowry built two spacious schools for the boys and girls, putting them in charge of the Christian Brothers and the Sisters of Charity, and these buildings were used for five years as the temporary church for the people.

For many years the free school was practically the poor school; the well-to-do patronized the private school, or the pay academy. It was a most arduous task to found the church-school system, and opposition to it was lively among Catholics themselves, but the archbishop succeeded in laying sure and handsome foundations after a struggle of twenty-five years. His death saw the diocese with the three colleges of Fordham, Manhattan and Sixteenth Street; the famous boarding schools of the Sacred Heart, Mount St. Vincent, the Ursulines and the Sisters of Mercy; any number of academies for boys and girls, and a system of church schools which, though humble, still formed a good beginning for the work that was to be done in the next administration.

While churches and schools were building and the parish organization was receiving its perfection, the demands of charity had to be satisfied and provision made for aiding the poor and

destitute. The hurried emigration of the Irish from their famine-stricken land, and the wretched transportation across the ocean led to much misery. The civil authorities were not prepared to deal with it for a long time, and private charity had to come to the rescue. As usual the Protestants took advantage of the distress of Catholics and of their misfortunes to turn them from their faith; orphan children were sent to Protestant homes, and State institutions forced Catholic inmates to apostatize. Every parish therefore had its conference of St. Vincent de Paul, the wonderful society founded by Frederic Ozanam for training Catholic men to the practice of charity. Its office at that time was purely parochial, local to the parish, succoring the distressed on the instant without waiting upon formulas; it came into immediate contact with all forms of distress, and learned speedily and effectively the problems to be dealt with; and its character may be estimated from the fact that men like Professor Anderson of Columbia delighted to serve as members and officers. The orphan asylum was one of the earliest necessities, not only because of the general helplessness of the children, but because they were the easiest and most sought for prey of the proselytizers. There were in the beginning two in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn, conducted by the Sisters of Charity. The two in Manhattan were merged into one, and Bishop Hughes secured for them a fine site and good buildings on Fifth Avenue near the new cathedral, where sisters and children were installed in 1852 to the number of five hundred. With the aid of the clergy and the watchfulness of the St. Vincent de Paul these institutions saved the children from being sent to the poor farms on Long Island and other places, to be turned into Protestants at the expense of the State. The Germans built their orphan asylum on East 89th Street in 1859.

The first hospital was built in 1849 by the Sisters of Charity,

under the lead of Sister Angela, a capable and energetic nun, who put in successful operation the institution known to fame as St. Vincent's. The Sisters of Mercy began their work of general charity in Houston Street in 1846, where they established a House of Mercy for poor girls and visited the sick poor throughout the city. Bishop Hughes commended their work to the people in his pastoral on the Jubilee of 1854, ordering the alms collected in the city during the Jubilee to be given to them for their enterprises of charity. He had learned from their chaplain that in the eight years of their establishment, amid many discouragements and much poverty, they had visited fifteen hundred poor sufferers, sheltered twenty-three hundred, and placed in situations nearly nine thousand poor girls, besides an infinity of other work in teaching the catechism, and preparing hundreds for the sacraments. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd opened a house for Magdalens on East Fourteenth Street in 1857, and succeeded in securing a good location for their work on the banks of the East River in 1859, where they built a remarkable institution.

With orphan asylums, refuge, hospital, and local charity societies working fairly, the archbishop felt that the diocese was doing as much as possible to meet the more pressing demands of charity. One element of want and disturbance existed, which had not been overlooked, but for which no ways and means had been devised: the wild boys of the city, too savage and vicious or foolish to be mastered by their parents and guardians, and not proper subjects for the asylums. They were sent usually to the State refuge, and soon lost there what little faith might have been in them. In behalf of these children a society was organized in the spring of 1863, and incorporated as The Society for the Protection of Destitute Catholic Children. The prime mover and

first president of the society was Levi Silliman Ives, former Episcopal bishop of North Carolina, now a distinguished member of the laity of New York. Two houses were opened by the society in East 86th Street, one for boys, the other for girls, and the Christian Brothers took charge of the male department while the Sisters of Charity superintended the home for the girls. Out of this beginning rose one of the most successful and remarkable reformatories for children in modern times, now known as the Westchester Protectors.

These various charities, the building up of Church schools, the formation of Catholic associations for pious and charitable work, the multiplication of parishes, would have developed as a matter of course with time, but not as rapidly as they did actually, had not the Protestants put an edge on Catholic desire by their unscrupulous use of their own and the State charities to proselytize. The bishop, the clergy, and the laity fought them everywhere, in the press, in the legislature, in the courts of law, as well as in the building up of the church organization. They fought for the right of administering to dying Catholics in State and in private institutions. Their demand was based on the constitutional rights of the citizen to the free exercise of his religion; the sectaries bitterly maintained that the granting of these rights meant union of Church and State. The Catholics had no rights in the eyes of citizens who could not bring themselves to accept the logical consequences of the political principles which their fathers had laid down. Their lack of courage and honesty made them hypocrites to themselves, and cruel masters to the helpless Catholics whom sickness and misfortune threw into their power. Fortunately all Protestants were not of their way of thinking, and the leading men of the time, intellects like Seward, and Greeley, and Lincoln, leaders like Thurlow Weed, President Polk, President Buchanan, and Henry Clay,

were ever ready to aid the Catholics in their struggle for common rights. The bigots indirectly hammered the Catholic policy into its proper shape, and the Catholics paid them back by winning the fight in behalf of the citizen's rights, rights that are his no matter what may be his nationality or his creed.



Convent of Mercy

CHAPTER XII

THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES



Rev. William Clowry

HARDLY a better illustration of the economic value of the religious community can be found than its career in the New York diocese during its period. The curious failure of the first communities, if failure it may be called, the withdrawal of the Trappists, the Ursulines and the Jesuits, seems to have made superiors shy of a New York venture; in fact the diocese bore a very bad reputation for many years among Catholics in general. When the feeling passed away, after the energetic Hughes had proved by his varied success the inherent greatness of the metropolis, the monks and nuns were in no hurry to make a settlement there. In 1840 there were only two communities at work; in the next fourteen years five were added to the number, and four more completed the list between 1854 and the death of the archbishop.

The theory of the religious community, so thoroughly and completely rejected by the Protestant polity, is perfect devotion to God and to the salvation of men. The first finds expression in departure from the ordinary ways of men, in the life of the community, in detachment from the world, in voluntary poverty, obedience and chastity, in a life regulated so as to approach daily to more perfect union with the divinity; the second is expressed in works of charity towards the needy. The presence of these

communities is a reminder and an inspiration to Catholics of that higher life to which they must aspire, according to their state. The economic value of the community is both financial and social: its members labor for one-third the cost or wages of the average worker; they bring the spirit of charity into their labor as well as natural powers and acquired skill, and the community is always a focus for lay activity, attracting, interesting and holding the laity in works of mercy and charity. In this chapter these statements will find illustration in the somewhat brief history of the eleven communities that were laboring in the diocese of New York by 1864.

The Sisters of Charity happened upon a crisis about the year 1846. They had been in the diocese, in charge of the orphan asylums for boys and girls, from the days of Bishop Connolly. Owing to the scarcity of religious communities they departed from their rule somewhat by taking charge of boys as well as girls, and when their superior at Emmettsburg, Maryland, ordered them to return to the former practice and retire from the management of male orphan asylums, a real calamity threatened the diocese, as there were no others to take their place. A lively correspondence took place between Bishop Hughes and the representative of the sisters. The bishop maintained that charity to the orphan demanded exemption from the particular rule, that to withdraw the sisters at that moment meant disaster to the orphan boys; the superior held to his position with resolution and ordered all the sisters in New York to return to the mother-house. In the end there was a compromise. Such sisters as chose to remain in New York were given permission to organize themselves into a separate community under the control of the bishop. Nineteen members returned home, thirty-one remained in charge of the orphans, and were at once formed into a com-

Mount St. Vincent
1875



munity, thenceforth known as the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. The restrictions of their former rule, which limited their activity to a particular routine, were removed, and the new community entered upon a career of usefulness hardly to be paralleled under similar conditions. They prepared themselves for any work that the people needed, and in a short time proved themselves capable of many things.

In the parishes they managed the free schools for boys and girls; their select schools became a feature of the education of that time; they opened several academies for young ladies; their institution of Mount St. Vincent became famous among educational foundations; in hospital work they won success, attested by the hospitals in New York and Yonkers; and while thus engaged in particular works at home they were enabled to spare many members to make foundations of the community in other parts of the country. Their success would seem to establish the truth of the proposition that the greater the variety of work undertaken by a community the more easily it attracts recruits for its general scheme. The Sisters of Charity in New York retained the simple costume adopted by their foundress, Mother Seton, a plain dress and cape of ~~dark~~ brown cloth with a bonnet of glazed stuff; their constitution was framed to make each diocesan group of members an independent entity; and they have thus continued to increase the fame of the courageous New York woman who made herself an outcast from her relatives and friends for the love of God and her neighbor.

In 1841, at the invitation of the bishop, the community known as the Ladies of the Sacred Heart opened an academy for the education of young ladies, on Houston Street. This society was founded in France in the year 1800, under the direction of Madame Barat, for the education of the daughters of the aristocracy.

To the American democrat this particular aim does not seem to fit with Christian charity, because the American is not aware of the conditions in France in 1800. The aristocracy had just been wiped out by the Revolution, the old institutions had been eradicated, and the rise of Napoleon to supreme power, while it enabled aristocracy to raise its head again, did not restore the convents and schools in which the daughters of the nobles had been trained. For the state schools they had only horror and disgust, richly deserved. It was, therefore, a real charity provided by the unselfish labors of Madame Barat and her associates, this formation of a community to look after the impoverished children of the nobility. Bishop Hughes found the children of wealthy Catholics in his diocese attending the very sectarian select schools, with bad results for their faith, and he endeavored to correct the evil by the introduction of this community. From that day the Ladies of the Sacred Heart community have carried out their aims with remarkable success. Their school at Manhattanville has become famous, and their methods have the warm commendation of the class whom they serve. They live in semi-cloistered fashion, never going abroad unless of necessity, and retain in the society the use of their own surnames. The different conditions prevailing in the United States have somewhat affected the original aim and method of the society, but on the whole the sisters have managed to adhere very well to the original spirit, and the children of the wealthier and more exclusive Catholics find in their schools the combination of refinement and Christian training properly held in esteem by careful parents.

In 1846 the Sisters of Mercy opened a house in New York, occupying the old academy of the Sacred Heart nuns on Houston Street. This community, destined to a remarkable career in America, began its existence in Ireland under the direction of a lady

of rank, Miss Catherine McAuley, in the year 1832. The aim of the society was the practising of the works of mercy, such as the care of the sick poor, the visitation of prisons and hospitals, the instructing of the young and ignorant in Christian doctrine and morality, and the management of institutions to carry out these various works of mercy. In New York City the emigrant girls were in great danger from the lack of proper guardians, and Government had not yet established its emigration commission and bureau. To look after the poor girls in particular Bishop Hughes secured the establishment of the Sisters of Mercy in his diocese. From the mother-house in Dublin seven sisters were detailed under the charge of Sister Mary Agnes O'Connor to begin the work in New York. For two years they were located in temporary quarters in Washington Square, until the property in Houston Street was secured for them. Here they began their labors by opening a select school for girls, the income of which supported the community ; in another part of the house they opened a refuge for working-girls, with work-rooms attached where they could be trained in the arts of housekeeping, needle-work, cooking, and other useful occupations ; and from this centre the visiting sisters made their rounds of the prisons, hospitals, and tenements, ministering to the unfortunate. In 1849 they erected a house of mercy beside the convent, where space and modern conveniences enabled them to do the utmost for the emigrant girls and other poor women in distress or danger.

At that time city charity had not taken the scientific form of the present day, and hundreds suffered without relief, both spiritually and physically. Therefore the work of the sisters had a high value, and figures give but a faint idea of its variety and success. In five years from its establishment the House of Mercy sheltered two thousand three hundred and twenty-three poor girls, and found situations for five thousand. Their free school educated two

hundred children, and of their visits to the sick poor, the imprisoned, the dying, of their charities in the shape of money, food, clothing, and other things, of their instruction of the young and ignorant, of the souls won back to decent living and saved from sinful death, of the wounded hearts healed and strengthened in affliction, the record runs up to infinity. When the war of 1861 began the sisters were asked by the Secretary of War to take charge of a military hospital in North Carolina, a commission which they accepted and executed with success. During the administration of Bishop Hughes their work was conducted on these lines, entirely among the poor; they conducted with success a number of societies for the betterment of moral and physical conditions among the workers, such as sodalities of the Blessed Virgin, and pious societies for married women, a work that is now peculiarly parochial; and their constant activity among all classes of people, among the rich to interest them in the poor, among the needy to serve them, made them a remarkable force in the world of that time.

Three other female communities were the Ursulines, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. The first was a society established in Italy in the latter part of the fifteenth century by St. Angela da Merici for general work among the poor; in time the community came to devote itself particularly to the education of young women, and achieved the reputation of being the leader in that good work during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and after a noble career in all parts of Europe it established itself in the United States in the State of Missouri. From this point came the community which settled at East Morristown in the New York diocese, opened an academy for girls, and has since devoted itself to this work. The School Sisters of Notre Dame were a French foundation originally, having been established in Lorraine, France, at the close of the sixteenth century. It was

wiped out by the French Revolution, but the bishop of Ratisbon revived it in 1832, it spread rapidly, and in 1854 the Redemptorist Fathers introduced the community into New York to take charge of their church schools for the Germans. What the Sisters of Mercy have been to the Irish, the School Sisters have been to the Germans, conducting schools, orphanages, and other charities efficiently. The community of the Good Shepherd is a French society, founded in 1829 at Angers, France, for the purpose of reclaiming fallen women and restoring them to society, of checking wayward girls in time and training them to habits of order and piety, and of leading reclaimed women into a life of penance, when they prefer to remain in community life. Most peculiar and most necessary of charities, it was received with great favor by all classes wherever established, and attained great success in its work. In 1857 two of its sisters opened a house on East Fourteenth Street, and in 1859 began the fine refuge and convent on the East River and Eighty-ninth Street which serves it to this day.

With these six female communities at work in 1864 Bishop Hughes felt that his diocese was fairly garrisoned in the struggle with want and misery. The Sisters of Charity were in charge of academies, select schools, orphan asylums, hospital, and parochial schools; the Sisters of Mercy were engaged in the care of the poor girls, of the unclassed poor, of the unknown sick and destitute, of wild children, and were doing their share in academy and school; the Madames and the Ursulines were in charge of the higher academies for young women and girls; the School Sisters had supervision in school, academy, and asylum of two thousand children; the Good Shepherd nuns were busy with the most wretched part of the community; and all in common carried on the work of interesting the laity in the duties of charity, and of instructing them in the frightful conditions among the poor; not

the least valuable and necessary feature of the great work of charity, the bringing together of the wretched and their happier brethren and patrons, the rich.

The male communities worked in a different sphere, although with the same aims and with nearly the same methods. The Redemptorist society was first on the ground. This community was founded by the eminent Italian theologian, St. Alphonsus Liguori, in the middle of the eighteenth century, for the purpose of reviving faith and morals among the most neglected classes of the Italian population. The members were trained to preach well to rude people, with whom simplicity and directness of speech are necessities; they were specially instructed in practical theology which has to do with the common affairs of life; they were trained in the art of attracting souls to the moral life; and they were taught to bear with the hardships peculiar to a guerilla warfare against vice, flying from town to town as the need required, submitting to long hours in the confessional, to poor accommodations and the simplest food, in fine to all the trials of such a condition. They enjoyed a wide renown for many years in Italy, and then sank into comparative obscurity; but the idea which their society embodied, direct missions to the poor, specialists to aid the regular pastors in abnormal or unusual conditions, was too valuable to remain long unrecognized, and in a few years the society received a great revival in Germany under the leadership of a remarkable man, Clement Hofbauer.

The society spread, and the upward movement has continued with unabated success to the present day. In 1832 they established themselves in this country, and were invited to settle in New York by the bishop in 1842. The parish of The Most Holy Redeemer was set apart for them on Third Street. Here they have labored ever since, illustrating brilliantly the value of such an

organization by a long series of services to the Church and the people extending over sixty years. Their presence was providential at that particular time, because the German emigration to the United States had begun. The lack of priests was severely felt, and Bishop Hughes did his utmost to secure them in all parts of the world. The Redemptorists took up with energy the work of evangelizing the Germans, not only in the immediate parish but throughout the State. In Third Street they built one of the fine churches of the country, at that early day a marvel for size and splendor; they introduced the School Sisters of Notre Dame and soon had a thousand children under training; they organized the parish of St. Alphonsus on the west side near Grand Street some years later; and between times they sent out their little bands of flying missionaries to the German parishes in the accomplishment of that work for which they were directly trained.

The establishment of the parish of St. Alphonsus included an idea that might have been oftener used in building up the Church in America. The Americans, the Germans, and the Irish of the parish united to build the church and to carry on the parish, which till this day has been administered with this proper and striking harmony among different races, with the natural and very desirable result that the Catholic races intermarried; a result absolutely essential to Catholic progress in this Republic; yet so far from actual attainment that Catholics find it far easier to marry with non-Catholics than with their brethren of other races, so keen is the race-feeling among them.

The Redemptorists found their missionary work more popular and more in demand as the years went on. At first they preached and worked only among the Germans. Then as their knowledge of English grew they began to give missions to the general crowd. They won a great success by grouping their American members

in 1851, and sending them out to work among the Americans in general ; and as the band included Isaac Hecker and his convert companions, as the work was new and the missionaries fervent in the extreme, the impression made upon the general public was both remarkable and lasting. The work of the society thereupon took another step forward, and novices speaking the English tongue were in demand. They responded promptly to the need, and to-day the society carries on its work in both languages. The increase of natives and English-speaking members naturally brought on the racial struggle in the community. For many years the leaders did not seem to grasp the facts, or to perceive the current of popular feeling ; they were for the most part Germans of the unbending sort, determined to keep the European in the ascendant ; but time and numbers were too much for them, and they came to an agreeable compromise which enables the American element in the community to develop in the proper natural fashion, unrepressed and unjacketed by the restrictions familiar in the struggle of races.

It would be difficult to overestimate the work of the missionaries, although its character has changed somewhat to suit the environment. The Redemptorists take possession of a parish for a period of a week, or of two, three, and four weeks, according to the need ; their preaching is of the simple and vivid order on the chief doctrines and duties of a Catholic ; it would be thought coarse by the more cultured people, and even extravagant ; the pictures of hell and purgatory are mediæval in color ; the consequences of sin, the judgment deserved by faithless parents and ungrateful children, the woe of drunkards and fornicators and thieves, are described with vigor ; but the result justifies the method, for the people flock to the confessional, their good resolutions are strengthened by the vivid impressions made upon them, and the revival of faith and religious life is sincere and enduring. The demand

for their services became in a short time far greater than their ability to supply missionaries, and has remained in that condition despite the increase of similar communities in the country. It has enabled the society to adhere strictly to the original aim, and to devote themselves to the training of a corps of missionaries destined to serve the people effectively in the future. While preaching is only one feature of their training, they have developed the art on lines of their own, more refined than of old, but none the less effective. The vigor of the society seems not yet to have reached its meridian.

Of the same character were the Fathers of Mercy, a French community which took charge of the parish of St. Vincent de Paul shortly after its foundation, built it up, and evangelized the French residents of the city, under the direction of Rev. Annet Lafont, a pious and energetic missionary. This society had its origin in the favorable times of Napoleon I, when the Catholics in France had to build all things new after the frightful storm of the Revolution, and were happy to have the opportunity. Numerous bands of the secular clergy formed themselves into communities for a particular end, leading the common life, both for the sake of economy and efficiency, as well as for their own sanctification. Father Lafont introduced into New York the society known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, or more commonly the Christian Brothers, engaging them to teach the boys in his parochial school on Canal Street. Bishop Hughes had vainly tried to secure a teaching community in behalf of the boys. Before his time the Jesuits had a college, a Brother Boylan had undertaken to conduct boys' schools for the diocese, and some Irish Christian Brothers had made the same venture. All failed for one or another reason. The parishes fell back upon lay teachers, whom they could never pay properly. It was, therefore, great good fortune when this French

community began its foundation in the metropolis. The community was composed entirely of laymen, bound by the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and the rule of the common life. It had been founded in the seventeenth century by St. Jean Baptist De la Salle, a priest of Rheims, for the purpose of teaching the children of the poor. Primary education in that age was without system and standing. The Saint of Rheims gave it both with his organization of laymen. These were first trained to sanctify themselves in the monastic life, and then prepared for the work of teaching. The religious training of poor boys was the aim of their system, and they won great success and esteem throughout France by their devotion and their skill in educating the children of the poor.

In New York the conditions were nearly the same as in France, with the difference that in a short time they were to change radically. The demand for Christian Brothers in America urged the officials to tremendous efforts to secure novices for their institute; and the response was so prompt that in ten years they had a score of schools going, parochial, academic, and collegiate, and had begun the work of training wild, abandoned, and orphan boys in the famous institution to be afterwards known as the Protectory. Their career became as remarkable in its own way as that of the Sisters of Charity. A special development of their system in this country was the classical school for professional men, and particularly for the priesthood. The leaders of the community proved themselves men of remarkable breadth of mind, and executive ability, and gave a stimulus to Catholic education and to Catholic young men which produced the highest results. The glory of their work in New York was Manhattan College at one extreme, and the Westchester Protectory at the other, two splendid witnesses to their zeal, energy, and ability.

The Jesuits entered the diocese the second time in 1846 to take charge of St. John's College at Fordham. The Society had more or less intimate connection with the territory from Governor Dongan's time, when two of its members opened a classical school in the town and had a chapel in the fort on Bowling Green ; when other members were missionaries to the Six Nations ; when Father Ferdinand Farmer said mass for the scattered Catholics from the Bay to Newburg ; and when Father Kohlmann administered the diocese in the vacancy after Bishop Concanen's death. After this last event the Jesuits disappeared from the city for thirty years. Their headquarters were in the diocese of Baltimore, which all the communities at that time favored both for its Catholic spirit and its closeness to the single archbishop of the country. At the invitation of Bishop Hughes they provided a faculty for his college at Fordham, and another for his seminary ; and about the same time they bought a Protestant church on Elizabeth Street, fitted it up for divine service, and opened an academy for youths beside it. Their career in New York began thus favorably on the lines required by their rule.

Next to the spiritual life, which in common with all religious communities the Jesuits make the chief work of the individual member, the intellectual training of the members is their most important feature. The course of studies is long and severe, and the student showing special gifts is encouraged to develop them. When the training is considered complete, the Jesuit finds a varied career ahead of him ; he may teach in the college, the academy, or the university, which regularly accompany a Jesuit establishment ; he may be appointed to the direction of souls in a parish, or as chaplain to public institutions, or as director to nuns and select souls ; he may join a mission band for the special work among sinners ; or he may seek the savages of far-off wildernesses

and devote his life to them. This variety of labor not only meets the taste of the individual member, but it serves to counteract the natural tendency to intellectualism. The Jesuit society has won as great renown in the mission field as in the field of education or in the field of authorship. In the United States the community, in spite of its centralization, its long course, and severe life, has attracted more recruits among the natives than any other. They bought St. John's College from Bishop Hughes; a fire having destroyed the church and school in the city, they erected the church and college in Sixteenth Street in 1852; and finally in 1855 the bishop made over to them for a stipulated sum the entire Fordham property. At the death of the archbishop the Jesuit community occupied a fine position in the diocese; its mission band contained famous and powerful men; the two colleges were the centre of a spiritual and intellectual life, and of a social activity, destined to do much for the general community of New York; and its leading members were engaged in the useful and delicate work of directing various communities.

The Jesuits and the Redemptorists were long established European communities; it was not so surprising that they should make an excellent beginning and achieve a well-deserved reputation in the diocese. That surprise was reserved for a new community, starting into life on the new soil, deriving its form from the older community, its principles from the same source, and even its methods, but finding its aim in the land of its birth. The Redemptorists numbered in their ranks five American converts, Isaac Hecker, Clarence Walworth, Augustine Hewit, George Deshon, and Francis Baker, who had passed through the prescribed novitiate and been ordained priests of the community. For five years four of the five had given missions throughout the country in the American tongue with astonishing success. It was a tremendous

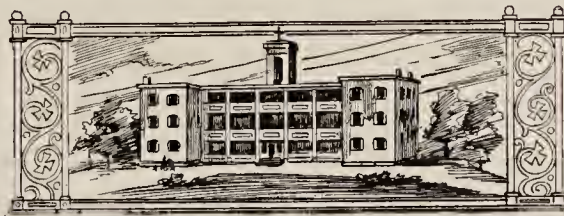
and significant novelty for the country to see natives, who had been brought up Protestants, some of them even had been ministers, preaching the Catholic religion with earnestness, power, and rich results. The wide influence which they won under the administration of a large-minded superior suggested the scheme of founding a house for English-speaking missionaries, a purely American foundation, in which English would be the language, Americans would supply the subjects, and the aim would be the preaching of the faith to non-Catholics. The question was discussed by the Redemptorists and shelved; the matter was brought to Rome, and its first result was the dismissal of Father Hecker from the community; but after a long examination of the affair an agreement was reached by which the Pope dispensed the five priests from membership in the Redemptorist community, and gave them permission to "apply themselves to the prosecution of the sacred ministry under the direction of the local bishops."

The German Redemptorists would not consent to a division of their American branch, nor would they consent to the founding of an American community subject to the Italian Redemptorists. Their influence was strong enough in Rome to prevent either scheme, and there remained open only the forming of an independent community. This was accomplished under difficulties, but a rule of life was drawn up, Archbishop Hughes approved it, and he gave them the half-settled territory of the west side of New York as a parish. Here they built a temporary church and convent, and began their work. Father Hecker was chosen superior. Their method of living and working was similar to that of the Redemptorists. Father Hecker thus described their principles: "The two poles of the Paulist character are : First, personal perfection. . . . The backbone of a religious community is the desire for personal perfection actuating its members. . . . The main pur-

pose of each Paulist must be the attainment of personal perfection by the practice of those virtues without which it cannot be secured, mortification, self-denial, detachment, and the like. . . . Second, zeal for souls to labor for the conversion of the country to the Catholic faith by apostolic work. Parish work is a part, an integral part of the Paulist work, but not its principal or chief work ; and parish work should be done so as to form a part of the main aim, the conversion of the non-Catholic people of the country. . . . Our vocation is apostolic—conversion of souls to the faith, of sinners to repentance, giving missions, defence of the Christian religion by conferences, lectures, sermons, the pen, the press, and like works ; and in the interior, to propagate among men a higher and more spiritual life.”

The members of this community, formed under the patronage of St. Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, took no vows, only a voluntary agreement to live in poverty, obedience and chastity. This point, and the direct aim to preach to non-Catholics, distinguished them from other communities. Their work from the beginning showed earnestness, originality, power and freedom from the conventional. Trouble came to them early. Father Walworth left them to work in the diocese of Albany ; the eloquent Father Baker died, and criticism showered upon them from every quarter. The idea of the community, however, appealed to the people, and the Paulists became very popular. Their missions, sermons, lectures had a flavor, an expression quite new and thrilling ; their church services and ceremonies were carried out with rubrical exactness and beauty ; they introduced the use of the Gregorian chant and trained a choir of men and boys for the purpose ; they took up the cause of temperance and total abstinence ; they printed sermons regularly, published hymns for congregational singing, brought out tracts and books ; in a word, they worked in every channel that promised

the salvation of souls. It was all new to this country, a large protest against routine, against the one good custom which corrupts the world. Many converts were brought into the Church and many joined the community. It was the sowing of the seed. What was so strange in that day has become in our time the commonplace of the really useful religious community. New York thus won the credit of starting the first community born on American soil, of American material, for an American object, an honor due to the Redemptorist community who trained these men, to the able archbishop who approved of their plan, and to the sincere and wonderful zeal of the first members.



Old Mount St. Vincent

CHAPTER XIII

CHURCH LEGISLATION — THE CATHOLIC PRESS



James A. McMaster

THE diocese was in existence thirty-four years when the first synod was called to enact proper laws for its government. In the circular letter to his clergy, inviting them to a retreat first and the synod afterwards, Bishop Hughes gave his reasons for the holding of a synod at that particular time. "The want of churches for the appropriate celebration of the divine mysteries, the paucity of clergymen, the scattered and unsettled state of the faithful, and the other deficiencies incident to new missions, require that many unavoidable departures from the wise and salutary regulations laid down for our guidance by the authority of the Church should be tolerated by the bishop. The time, however, has now arrived when, it is believed, these irregularities, resulting from the necessity of circumstances, may be diminished, if not entirely removed." The clergy were directed to meet at St. John's College, in Fordham, after vespers on August 21, of the year 1842, to bring with them a full set of clerical vestments if possible, also certain books of devotion and reference, and to come prepared for a retreat of eight days and a synod of three. Rev. John Timon, the Lazarist missionary, afterwards the first bishop of Buffalo, preached the retreat, which was carried out with due attention to the rubrics; the synod was conducted with great solemnity also, as a sign of that stricter order which was now to be introduced into the conduct of the diocese; and

its significance was increased by the number of priests in attendance — sixty-six out of a possible seventy-two. The laws enacted numbered thirty-three, of which the majority were mere reaffirmations of the common law of the Church, and a few illustrated peculiar conditions.

It was ordered that within three months every church having a resident pastor should erect a baptismal font, that baptism should no longer be conferred in private houses, and that the clergy should take great care to observe the ritual closely in administering the sacrament, with the usual exceptions for people residing at great distances from the church and too poor to hire conveyances. The custom of delaying confirmation until children had been properly instructed and prepared for the reception of penance and the eucharist was approved, and it was ordered that the parish records should include a book of the confirmed to be kept as carefully as the record of baptism. Under pain of suspension the clergy were forbidden ever to celebrate mass without a cassock, or to carry about the blessed sacrament differently from the method prescribed by the rubrics, or to deposit it in any private place for safe keeping. Confessionals were ordered to be placed in every church within three months, and in private houses where stations were held the ordinary wicket was to be used. Four days' notice was required from people intending to marry; they were to make confession of their sins before the marriage ceremony; care was to be used to prevent bigamous marriages, and Germans were to be married by German priests, in towns where a German church existed. In all public functions decency and beauty were to be cultivated; the holy days and fast days were to be announced by the priest the preceding Sunday; the priest was not to absent himself from his parish over Sunday without express permission of the bishop; he was ordered to provide his church with the proper

material for giving benediction ; he was allowed not more than ten days from Holy Thursday to provide himself with the holy oils, and in the holding of funerals the ceremonies were to be performed in a church, and the popular funeral oration was discouraged. With regard to the tenure of church property and the behavior of the trustees, it was enacted that no priest could hold church property in his own name ; the trustees could spend no money without the pastor's permission ; outside of the ordinary current expenses neither pastor nor trustees could spend more than one hundred dollars without special permission from the bishop ; and a book was to be kept containing a list of the church properties for the information of all parties interested. Proper provision was made for the support of the bishop ; the clergy were urged to uphold the standard of clerical life, and the secret societies of the time were put under the usual ban.

The pastoral letter which followed the synod and the promulgation of the decrees was of greater interest to the public in general than the decrees themselves. It was a dignified document, most instructive for the people, and framed to give them a profound satisfaction with the work of the first synod. To the clergy the bishop declared his full competency, speaking canonically, to enact these laws himself, and in asking their counsel he acted not from any necessity of their co-operation, but simply to avoid blunders by using their knowledge of actual conditions. The laity received a full explanation of the various decrees as far as they affected the people in general. The spectacle of the bishop and clergy enacting laws for the government of the diocese gave a shock to the more suspicious Protestants of the time. The editors of the *Journal of Commerce* and of the *Commercial Advertiser* took the bishop to task for his "bold, bigoted, impudent" language to freemen, and a vigorous controversy followed. It

was based largely upon a misunderstanding of the conditions with which the bishop was dealing, and prompted wholly by a profound bitterness at the remarkable increase of Catholicity in a country whose freedom and intelligence were supposed to be utterly destructive of the thing called "Romanism."

The controversy died out after a time. Bishop Hughes held another synod in 1848, of which no traces remain, owing to the probable fact that no new decrees were promulgated. The effect of the first synod was prompt and beneficial in many directions. Trusteeism faded quite away, the secret societies popular among the Irish lost their popularity and died out, the financial management of churches improved, public worship became more solemn and beautiful, and the general impulse given to both clergy and laity worked in channels hardly contemplated by the bishop in passing the decrees. The public criticism of the press did good rather than harm, not merely by attracting attention to the progress of the Church, but chiefly by its expression of public feeling on a matter of vital importance. When the average citizen came to understand that the synod was no more than the usual function of a corporate body framing its own laws of conduct, suspicion and opposition died out.

Consequently, when, over a decade later, the first provincial council was held, amid circumstances more unfavorable, and with a splendor that attracted all, the event caused no tumult and very little criticism. New York was made an archiepiscopal see in 1850, at the same time with Cincinnati and New Orleans, and its territory embraced the States of New York and New Jersey and all New England. In 1852 the first plenary council of the Church in the United States was held in Baltimore, with Archbishop Kenrick presiding as apostolic delegate. It was in order, therefore, for the bishops of the New York province to hold a

council the next year, and to ratify the decrees of the plenary council while proclaiming their own. The period was unfavorable, because the Knownothings were then at the height of their success and popularity, and planning for the next Presidential election. Their street preachers were numerous and most insulting and inflammatory in their language. Archbishop Hughes never stepped out of his course for people of this character. He called the council for September of 1854, and assembled about him the bishops of Albany, Buffalo, Boston, Hartford, Burlington, Brooklyn and Newark. They marched in state through the street from the residence to the cathedral, a splendid procession of altar-boys, seminarians, priests and prelates, and the archbishop preached a significant sermon. His subject was love for the neighbor, suggested by the gospel of the day, and also by the mission of the Catholic Church, visible that day in one of her brilliant functions. The concluding paragraphs give an idea of the whole sermon: "Let us not be down-hearted if, when we are insulted by the living voice of public brawlers in the streets, the newspaper press which used to be, in the happier days of this Government, the guardian of every man's rights, which spoke with authority far more powerful than that of governor, mayor or legislator, because it kept always before its eyes the original principle of equality between men, leaving every man to be punished by the law according to the extent of his own personal guilt—if a degraded newspaper press be found echoing and almost apologizing for indecencies that it used to notice only with indignant scorn and reprobation. It is no longer true to its calling. Before you retire, therefore, I would exhort you to unite in prayer, such as will be offered in this sanctuary, that Almighty God may bless our council; that our deliberations may be conducted so as to promote His glory and to increase the love

of Him among mankind, and the love of mankind among themselves.”

The council lasted a week and enacted six decrees. The first testified to the obedience and devotion of the prelates to the Holy See; the second promulgated the decrees of the first seven provincial councils of Baltimore as laws of the province; the third forbade priests to mortgage church property without the permission of the bishop; the fourth urged the erection of church schools; the fifth admonished the clergy to refrain from exercising their ministry in other dioceses than their own without permission of the ordinary; and the sixth commanded the erection of parochial residences wherever possible, whose title, and the title of all other church property, were to be vested in the bishop. At the close of the council a letter was written to the Pope submitting the decrees for his approval; another was sent to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, thanking it for past generosity and soliciting further favors for the American mission; and a pastoral letter was drawn up by Archbishop Hughes, in the name of the fathers of the council, addressed to the faithful of the province. After a recommendation to the faithful to bear themselves with dignity and patience during the Know-nothing persecution, the letter announced that hereafter the banns of marriage would become a necessary function, and it encouraged the clergy in their good work of building up the Church schools. It then continued:

“Two other subjects have engaged the attention of the fathers in the council which has just been brought to a close. One is the indiscriminate reception into your families of journals not at all calculated to impart, either to you or to those committed to your care, those solid maxims of public instruction which would tend to edification. We do not intend to speak of merely secular papers, but we do speak rather of those which, taking advantage of

certain feelings supposed to be alive in your breasts, whether in reference to kindred, country, or religion, involve you in political relations which it would be expedient for you to avoid, except, indeed, in the sense in which it is the right of every free man to give his vote freely, conscientiously, individually, as often as the laws of the country call upon and authorize him to do so. There appears to be abroad an ignorance or a prejudice on this subject, which it would be our desire and to your interest to have removed. It is to the effect that every paper which advocates, or professes to advocate, the Catholic religion, or which advocates some imaginary foreign interest in this country, is, as a matter of course, under the direction of the priests and bishops in the locality where it is published, and consequently authorized to speak for and in the name of the Catholic Church. Hence, when the editors of such papers publish their own sentiments, by virtue of their indisputable right to exercise the liberty of the press, it is assumed by persons outside our communion that they speak in the name of the Church, and under direction of her pastors. Nothing could be more false than this inference, and we exhort you, venerable and beloved brethren, to leave nothing unsaid or undone to remove every shadow of foundation for this inference, so absurd in itself, but yet so injurious to us."

This paragraph was aimed at the Irish partisan papers of the time, *The Nation*, *The American Celt*, and *The Citizen*, and also at some of the journals published in the interest of the Catholic body. The writers of the Young-Ireland party, recently defeated and exiled after an attempt at revolution in Ireland, were numerous and aggressive in New York, and attacked the Church for its hostility or indifference to their patriotic but unpractical enterprise. Their attitude was not consistent at any time, for the religious views of their editors were contradicted by their political

principles. Archbishop Hughes always alluded to them as "the supposed Catholic press." He criticised their methods and principles sharply, disowned their co-operation and denounced a few as atheistic and revolutionary after the worst European type. One of them ventured to advise him to keep secret from the American people the generous contribution to the Pope in his necessities, made by New York Catholics that year, and received for his pains a very thorough castigation in a morning paper. John Martin, in the columns of *The Citizen*, for three months heaped the archbishop with criticism and abuse, but for some reason the prelate never replied. Martin was a Protestant and a patriot of the most advanced type, and had suffered in the Irish cause. These journals were of an exaggerated character, so Irish that they would have everything Irish and so optimistic that the freedom of Ireland seemed in their pages just about to be obtained. Privately they were despised by the bishops and clergy for their lack of ballast, and publicly they were excoriated for their attempts to use religion as an aid to patriotic moonshine schemes. After a desperate struggle for existence they passed into oblivion.

A second provincial council was held in January, 1860, under peculiar circumstances. Its duration was brief and it passed no decrees, the main object being the publication of a pastoral letter from all the bishops on the existing conditions of the Holy See. The American press had gone stark mad, following the lead of the English press, on the question of Italian unity, and incidentally on the destruction of the Pope's temporal power. Their columns teemed with insulting and lying diatribes on the papal government, meetings were held upon the slightest pretext to denounce the Pope, and Catholics were regularly taunted with the approaching downfall of the papacy. As a rule the bishops accepted the situation in patience, deeming it safer to say nothing

than to run the risk of fanning public feeling into a dangerous flame. Dr. Hughes thought otherwise. He had the instinct of admiration for his leader and the desire to display his fidelity in the very face of the enemy. To him is due rather than to any other the development of that singular devotion to the Holy See displayed by the Catholics of America. In eloquent terms he announced to the people the accession of Pius IX to the throne in 1846; during the exile at Gaeta he sent the Pope twenty thousand dollars; on his safe return to Rome he preached a thrilling and exultant sermon of triumph and joy, which set the people mad with delight and the journals wild with indignation; and at all times he defended with ability and vigorous utterance the papal government against the assaults of the prejudiced and ignorant. His letters on this one point would make an interesting book. In 1860 the political atmosphere of Italy looked very threatening for the Pope. The American press was particularly offensive, and the archbishop thought the time very favorable for a strong and effective utterance in behalf of the Holy See.

The bishops of the province assembled in the last days of January and signed the pastoral letter, which was dated the nineteenth of January. It was written in the archbishop's best vein, forcible, dignified, sarcastic and effective: "It is proposed to diminish, if not altogether destroy, his temporal power, and . . . to give him back to us and to two hundred millions of Catholics over the globe a most respectably sustained pensioner and prisoner in Rome, with an extent of territory so limited that nothing shall be found therein except peace and happiness." Next the letter reviewed an essay supposed to have been written by Emperor Napoleon on the subject of the temporal power, and summed the essay up in this fashion: "The temporal power of the Pope is essential—first proposition. But that same power must be

limited to a state without any extent — second proposition. The Emperor of the French is not the man to fall into such contradiction.” Against the spoliation of the Pope on any pretext whatever the bishops uttered their protest. “In proclaiming, therefore, our solemn protest against any invasion of the temporal rights of the Pope, we do not consider ourselves as interfering in a question that is foreign to us. But we do so by virtue of a double right. One is, the right of giving free expression to our convictions; and the other is, the interest which, in common with all Catholics, we claim to possess in the integrity of the states of the Church.” They felicitated the American Government on its happy condition. “In this country the Government treats us, as it does all citizens, without favor, without prejudice, without partiality. It does not claim nor wish to interfere with our attachment to our supreme spiritual head. And if an attempt should be made to destroy the sovereignty of the Holy Father, or diminish its extent, it is our right, as free American citizens, as well as prelates of the Church of God, to protest and to resist.” It then discussed the basis of the papal claim to its territory, the origin of the temporal power; scored the Carbonari and other societies for their fanaticism and misdeeds, and warned the French emperor and other Catholic princes against permitting the threatened iniquity. “If princes are weary of the glorious privilege which God has conferred on them, of protecting the Sovereign Pontiff, let them abdicate any such pretensions. Let them not, however, spring upon Catholic christendom, without notice, a policy so cruel, so unjust as that which they seem to meditate. Let them make known to christendom that they have ceased to protect the head of the Church; let them allow ten years for the Catholic peoples to provide the means of sustaining and defending the Holy Father in all his rights, and it will be strange indeed if the subjects

shall not, during that period, be in a position to carry on a duty which the sovereigns have neglected or betrayed."

It scored England for her share in fomenting rebellion in the states of the Church. The English cabinet had not concealed its sympathy with the Carbonari, and all men knew the aid it was furnishing in money and arms. The bishops arraigned the English Government severely for past and present duplicity, and for proclaiming the right of revolution in all other countries than its own. "Indeed, one might ask, can this be the same Great Britain which spent millions of money and sacrificed thousands of lives to crush the practical application of this principle, when the United States, then only British colonies, attempted to put in practice the doctrine now proclaimed by the official authority of British rulers? Is this the same Great Britain that sacrificed men's lives and millions of their property to crush out the results of the French Revolution, and which at the bayonet's point imposed upon the French people, then maddened and misled like the people of the Romagna, a dynasty which they had rejected? Is this the same Great Britain that made the Irish patriots of '98 familiar with the triangle of torture and the scaffold of death, for no crime except that of attempting to put into practice the principles which it now promulgates? Is this the same Great Britain which crushed the Canadian people in the year 1838, for their attempts to carry out what is now considered to be a legitimate principle of human government? Is this the same Great Britain which authorized the tying at the cannon's mouth of patriots and princes in Hindostan, to be shot in fragments through the air, because they had attempted in the name of their own country to have a government compatible with their own will, and in strict conformity with the rules which Downing-street now proclaims as legitimate, or at least applicable to the relations between His Holiness the Pope and his revolting

subjects in the Romagna? . . . But let England pause. She is by no means omnipotent. Let her not overtax her real power by the ambiguity or duplicity of annunciations to the world, authorizing principles which, if applied, might lead to the overthrow of her own greatness."

The letter concluded with an appeal to the people. "Dearly beloved, it is our duty to urge these truths upon your attention at a time when the father of lies is unusually active in spreading his falsehoods and his misrepresentations; when men of sin, angels of darkness, exhibit themselves as angels of light, talk of virtue which they never practised, and of liberty which on their lips means licentiousness, or the liberty to despoil and oppress. It is also our duty to urge you to pray for the visible head of God's Church. It is our duty to pray with you for him. The chalice of bitterness which is pressed to the lips of Pius IX may not pass away in consequence of even our prayers, for God has His own method of protecting the Church and of governing the world. But, at all events, it may bring some consolation to the heart of our revered Most Holy Father to know that even his distant children on these shores sympathize with him in his present afflictions."

Probably no document ever emanated from a diocesan council so candid and bold in its utterance, so unsparing in its arraignment of European courts and American Pope-baiters, whose number was legion at this moment and whose chief was the fluent and hare-brained Margaret Fuller, correspondent of the *New York Tribune*. Its first effect was felt in America. The Catholic people hailed it with delight, irritated and depressed as they were with the diatribes and lies on the Pope with which the journals teemed, discouraged by the weak-kneed of their own belief, who advocated the abolition of the temporal power. It was a trumpet-blast to them, a defiance to the army of scribblers, ministers, editors, and

word-brawlers, whom it arraigned as irresponsible and ignorant falsifiers. The bishops of the country were somewhat frightened by its uncompromising language, and feared its effect upon bigots at home and the radicals of Europe. The American press accepted it with unwonted placidity and profound interest. Archbishop Hughes looked for a storm of bitter criticism, but to his great astonishment, "the pastoral letter has been received by the Protestants with very great indulgence. Many of the secular papers criticize one portion or another, but not one has attempted to grapple with the whole document. On the other hand some of them have not only adopted its whole doctrine, but have also recommended it in special articles to the consideration of their readers."

A copy was sent to all the monarchs of Europe with the exception of Queen Victoria and King Victor Emmanuel; to all the bishops of Great Britain and Ireland, and to many bishops in France; and the Pope had it translated at once into Italian and copies scattered throughout Italy. The reading of it must have given great delight to the European bishops, for such candor in speech had never been permitted in countries where diplomatic phrasing concealed as far as possible the actual meaning of a document. In a letter to a friend Archbishop Hughes wrote: "If our language should appear too strong for European latitudes, you will bear in mind that a tamer style would produce very little impression here; and that probably very many bishops in Europe would expect from us plain, out-spoken language which it might not be considered either lawful or expedient for them to utter. We know that they must speak under a certain amount of restraint or of prudent reserve. They, on the other hand, know that our Government, taking no part in the affairs of religion, leaves us at perfect liberty to speak the whole truth on the subject of the Pope's tem-

poral power. Our Catholic laity needed such a document to brace them up, since all manner of evil has been said and published in Protestant journals against the government of the Holy See."

The pastoral letter did credit to his judgment by the healthful effect which it exercised on the community at large ; and to deepen that effect by deeds as well as words the archbishop followed it up with a widely announced sermon to be delivered on the first of July in the cathedral, in which the subject of the temporal power would be treated extensively. What gave this discourse brilliant point was the amount of money collected and sent to the Pope with addresses from the Catholics of the diocese ; a magnificent gift of fifty-three thousand dollars, to which every Catholic, man, woman, and child, had personally subscribed his portion. Standing before his people in the cathedral on that morning, Archbishop Hughes undoubtedly felt that his utterances had significance for the whole world, as well as for them ; and he spoke with unusual power and spirit, giving a history of the temporal power, and a vivid description of the prevailing conditions in Rome. The Pope could not restrain his tears when the address and the purse were presented to him.

His Holiness had previously declared himself, in his grief at the threatening political conditions, bereft of friends ; and had announced his intention of begging his bread rather than accept a penny from the princes who had betrayed him. The spirit and the generosity of the American Catholics, expressed in the pastoral letter and in the contribution to his needs, touched and surprised him. He sent a special medal to Archbishop Hughes, and for a time felt strongly urged to recognize the remarkable services of the prelate and his people by conferring upon him the honors of the purple. From this well-deserved recompense his mind was turned by the criticisms of other American bishops on the policy of New

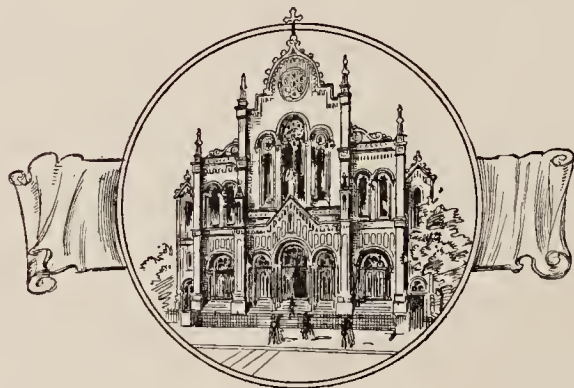
York. They feared Hughes, for his boldness was beyond their imitation. They were ever in fear of some popular rising due to his uncompromising utterances, and although twenty years of success ought to have reassured them, the great archbishop was as much distrusted in 1860 as at the beginning of his career. When his services to the Government during the war led President Lincoln to suggest to the Holy See special honors for him, the critics made his very intimacy with the Government the basis of an argument against any recognition of his services. Therefore he was not made cardinal. The creator of that vigorous loyalty to the Holy See, which has marked American Catholics since his day, had to fight for the position which he had taken both against the Protestants and the timid Catholics. As usual the result of the battle was entirely in his favor. He became more popular and influential than ever with the Catholic people, more respected by his adversaries, and more valued by the national Government, then in the throes of the Civil War.

The third provincial council was called in June of the fateful year of 1861, to enact the laws which had been deferred in the council of the previous year. Seven decrees were passed, which illustrate the changing conditions of the time. The first gave a precise statement of the duties of the clergy in matters that were being overlooked or neglected; the second ordered a close and conscientious superintendence of the church schools, that their efficiency be increased and abuses kept out; the third provided for the more solemn celebration of the mass under the improved conditions of the churches; the fourth drew more tightly the reins of discipline in the matter of marriage; the fifth ordered that church funds be kept separate from all other funds; and the sixth and seventh made further provisions for the tenure of church property. The decrees were approved by the Pope in the following August.

In the pastoral letter issued by the bishops the educational authorities were taken to task for their proselytizing efforts in the public schools. "We still have to deplore that in most of the States comprised within this ecclesiastical province, in the public schools, for the establishment and maintenance of which we have to bear an equal share of the burthen with our fellow-citizens, the rights, the faith, and the conscience of our children are not equally respected. We hope that a sense of justice will ultimately remove the evil." This utterance brought forth the usual criticism from all quarters, from the timid Catholics for its boldness, from the proselytizers in their own defence. It died away in the clamors of the dreadful war that had just begun.

In a letter to a friend the archbishop explained his use of forcible language in his public documents. "The people of this country, and especially those among whom I have lived, have great respect for a manly, straightforward, and outspoken vindication of any rights, whether civil or ecclesiastical, which men deem worthy of being defended at all. The gentle language of meekness and forbearance, which, in ordinary circumstances, should flow from the lips and the pen of a Christian bishop, would have no effect upon the class of adversaries that I have had to deal with. They are a class who have very little respect for those who submit tamely to aggression of any kind, when the assailed party has truth and justice and reason on his side. They look upon tame submission to wrong of any kind, not as a virtue, but as an encouragement to the evil-doer, nay, as a scandal, inviting oppression and even persecution." And again: "The bishops throughout the interior, residing in their quiet towns or villages, are anxious to propagate the kingdom of Christ in all simplicity and mildness, without saying or doing anything that would excite the enmities or opposition of the Protestants among whom they live. The same remark would

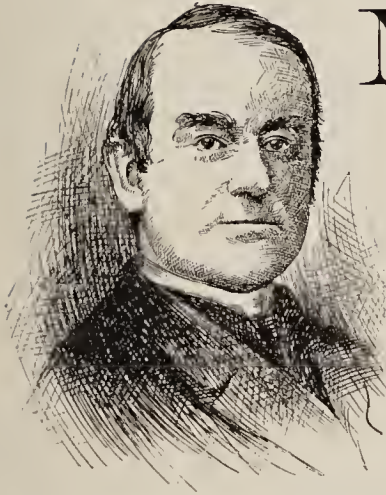
apply to several of the episcopal sees established in cities of a populous and prosperous character. Now my lot was cast in the great metropolis of the whole country. My people were composed of representatives from almost all nations. . . . They were surrounded by many inducements to diverge from the unity of the Church, both in profession and in practice. Many snares were laid for them ; and, under these circumstances, I found it expedient to adopt a mode of government resulting almost by necessity from the peculiarity of my position. I had to stand up amongst them as their bishop and chief ; to warn them against the dangers that surrounded them ; to contend for their rights as a religious community ; to repel the spirit of faction among them ; to convince their judgment by frequent explanations in regard to public and mixed questions ; to encourage the timid and sometimes to restrain the impetuous ; in short, to knead them up into one dough, to be leavened by the spirit of Catholic faith and Catholic union.”



Church of St. Stephen

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AGAINST CATHOLICS



Rev. Edward O'Reilly

NO one expected that the Catholic Church would thrive in the Republic. A favorite theory with the Protestant preachers was that the very freedom which charged the American air would destroy Popery. Very early this theory was discovered to be valueless. Immigration swelled the Catholic numbers, churches, convents, charities and schools became numerous, and celebrations like the consecration of Bishop Hughes drew

thousands of interested citizens, Protestants and Catholics, to witness them. A certain class of leaders began to feel that barriers should be built up against the spread of Romanism. Controversies sprang up on the differences of the rival creeds, and were carried to the point of bitter and reckless statement in the public journals. Public opinion was instructed and fired by the harangues of the ministers all over the country; the indifferent could see for themselves that immigration was increasing from Ireland; a labor question sprang up in connection with the rising flood of foreigners, and shrewd but officeless politicians took advantage of the circumstances to blaze the way for their own benefit.

The first step toward organized opposition to foreigners was taken, strangely enough, in Louisiana, where foreigners were not to be found. The immigrants from Europe settled themselves

mostly in the Atlantic States, though not a few found their way to Ohio. In 1840 half the voters of Cincinnati were of foreign birth, twenty-eight per cent Germans and twenty-two from the British Isles, France and Italy. The cry went abroad that the country was about to be swamped by the satellites of the Pope and the very dregs of Europe. A demand was made upon the political parties of the time for such a reform in the laws of naturalization as would make citizenship depend on a residence of twenty-one years, and various other schemes, mostly directed at the Catholics, were invented. The leaders of the great parties, the Whigs and the Democrats, could not reconcile themselves to such a loss of votes as reform measures would surely entail. They declined to meddle with the question, and in their platforms and pamphlets reassured the immigrant on the situation. Then began talk of a new party based on the principle: none but natives on guard. A meeting was held at the Astor House in 1840 by eminent men to consider the feasibility of founding a native organization. It was one of the charges against General Scott, in his Presidential campaign, that he had attended that meeting. Nothing came of it. Other meetings failed elsewhere. In 1841 a section of the people of Louisiana called a convention and founded a party which they called American Republican, but which became better known as the Native-American party. They began work by electing a part of the municipal ticket of New Orleans on their platform.

The principles of the new party were anti-Catholic as well as anti-foreign. Only natives were to be allowed to hold Government office, and naturalization could be obtained only after a residence of twenty-one years in the country; the union of Church and State was to be prevented, the Bible kept in the public schools, and the encroachment of Rome upon American institutions was

to be firmly resisted. It is quite probable that the movement would never have so much as started had not the dread of the Pope been so amusingly keen. The historian, McMaster, declares that the foreigners themselves were partly to blame for the popular feeling against them, by their introduction of old-world vendettas into the West, by the Catholic demand for a share in the school funds, and by their attack on the Bible of King James. This is misleading. It was the Orangemen and certain ministers who introduced disorder and riot. The Catholics and their leaders were notoriously timid at the time. Their schools were getting a share of the general fund until the bigots intrigued to cut them off. The attack on King James' Bible was not intended to drive it from the schools, but to secure the right of the Catholic child to read his own Bible. It required the bold and masterful spirit of Bishop Hughes to marshal the Catholics for their own defence against the persecution of the Native-Americans.

Whatever may have been the principles and methods of the Native-American leaders, many of their followers were bent on pillage, burnings and murder. Riots marked the formation of the party all over the country, with the usual consequences, churches burned and Catholics murdered. Philadelphia suffered a tremendous calamity. In New York the energetic bishop took his own measures. So close was the vote between the Whigs and the Democrats in the city elections of 1843 that only the votes of the Irish gave success to the Democrats. In return for the service offices were given to several Irishmen, which caused so much indignation that at the next election Whigs and Democrats bolted their parties and joined with the insignificant Native-Americans to elect their mayor. This official was a member of the Harper publishing house, and had signalized himself by taking a prominent part in the Maria Monk conspiracy. This

success stimulated the new party to larger efforts. But their foundations were not good. In 1845 they lost the municipal election in New York, Bishop Hughes and the armed guards in the churches frightened them from riot and murder, and the national scheme collapsed in 1847, when not a Native-American had a seat in Congress.

Nevertheless in spite of their failure great harm had been done to public feeling. The issue of Catholic encroachment had been raised, and a social and political persecution of the Catholics began. Catholics were shut out of office, denied employment, confined to the most menial occupations, refused their rights as citizens and natives, calumniated from pulpits; prisoners in the jails, patients in the hospitals, orphans and the abandoned in the refuges were deprived of the sacraments, and forced to attend Protestant worship; and these wrongs were inflicted with so much obloquy, slander and meanness by ministers and officials and teachers, that European tyrannies suffered little by contrast with the American. In fact they were all the more odious, for the persecutors hypocritically confessed that they acted in the name of liberty. Patriotism they declared to be the motive of their barbarity; the country and the Constitution were in danger from the encroachments of Romanism, and in order to escape a future St. Bartholomew's day they must reduce the Catholics, native and naturalized, to the political level of slaves. That this suspension and violation of the Constitution might be justified, the vilest accusations against the Church, its representatives and its members were scattered over the country. So bitter and wild were the exaggerations of the ministers and the press that the simpler sort got the idea that all Catholics were red-handed pirates, and all priests and prelates minions of Satan, cloven-hoofed, horned, tailed and fire-spouting.

The Catholics of New York under the leadership of their bishop bore themselves with exemplary prudence and patience. The rowdiness of Orangemen and other bigots drew from them no reply. They were satisfied with the effective display of force made by Bishop Hughes in defence of the churches, with his triumph over the Native-American Mayor Harper, with the failure of the mob to get a footing in New York. In their determination to defend their property to the last ditch, they had the support and advice of the leading citizens. The officers of the city seemed to have no effective way of defending citizens against rioters, and the law allowed no remuneration for property destroyed in a riot. The legal advisers of Bishop Hughes assured him that under such circumstances the Catholics could defend their property by arms, if necessary, against the invader. There was no invasion, however. The bishop declared that in other cities there would have been no mobbing if the Catholics had but taken proper measures of defence; to which some of the clergy sarcastically replied that there would have been no mobs had the bishop of New York been less prone to printed onslaughts on Protestantism. That, of course, was an exaggeration. In a few years the Native-American party was dead, killed by its own anæmia and the Mexican war.

Its spirit survived, and soon found expression in a different form. Political disturbances in Europe in 1848, the terrible famine in Ireland, and the discovery of gold in California set the stream of immigration flowing again. In three years there came as many immigrants from Europe as in the preceding ten from 1840 to 1850. The Democrats had triumphed over the Whigs at the polls, and the Whigs had gone to pieces; Clay and Webster died in 1852; and the desperate Whigs turned to the remnant of the Native-Americans for aid and alliance. These disturbers had not given up entirely their propaganda of hatred. With their encour-

agement one Edward Wilson escaped from a religious house in Cincinnati, and published the usual "awful disclosures" after the Maria Monk fashion; they helped to found a rabid journal called the *North American Protestant* in 1846; they aided in the circulation of a book by an Italian ex-monk, Giustiniani, which revealed the supposed secrets of the confessional; and they took up the apostate priest, Alessandro Gavazzi, once a popular Barnabite orator, and almoner to the papal army, now become a street-preaching tramp, a revolutionist of the Mazzini type, and a rabid anti-Catholic. Under Native-American auspices this man went about the country reviling Catholics and preaching the anti-Catholic crusade. His indictment lacked nothing which diabolic falsehood could invent; (the priests were given to the lowest forms of debauchery; all nuns were prostitutes, and their convents and academies were brothels;) the formal aim of the Church, whose agents were increasing daily in America, was the destruction of liberty, the overthrow of all republics, in particular of the American Republic; and the only safety lay in the destruction of Catholics. The success of this mountebank was not profound with the leaders, but with the multitude his popularity had some dimensions.

In 1852 the general ferment crystallized in the formation of a society called The Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner. The first meeting was held in the City of New York, the society was secret and oath-bound, and at that time neither its name nor its purpose, hardly its existence, was known. It spread rapidly but secretly; the local associations were grouped by States, and the central authority was a Grand Council, with president, vice-president, secretaries, inside sentinel, outside sentinel, and chaplain; the conditions of membership required a minimum age of twenty-one, belief in the existence of God, and unquestioning obedience to the will of the society; all creeds and all parties were represented

in the membership. In two years it became known by its success at the polls, and had to make some explanation of its existence and its aims. The average member replied to all questions with the phrase, "I don't know," and thus secured for his society the popular nickname of Knownothing. One authority described its objects as "anti-Romanism, anti-Bedinism, anti-Papistalism, anti-Nunneryism, anti-Winking-Virginism, anti-Jesuitism. Knownothingism is for light, liberty, education, and absolute freedom of conscience, with a strong dash of devotion to one's native soil."

A soberer description presented the Knownothing as a man who opposed political Romanism, but not the Roman religion; who would have all church property taxed; who would prevent any foreigner, under the names of bishop, priest, pastor, appointed by foreign ecclesiastical authority, from having control of any property, church, or school in the United States; who would keep foreigners out of political office, put the naturalized citizen below the native, and not even allow the native children of foreigners to have full rights unless trained and educated in the common schools. These political principles were popular, and Bishop Hughes had fought most of them during his administration. The society in two years numbered nearly half a million members.

As their numbers increased and evidence of their power at the polls became clear, the ferment among the people began to simmer. Street preachers multiplied, among them an effective fanatic named Orr, who paraded as the Angel Gabriel and incited his listeners to arson and murder. This man travelled about through New York and New England, and left a trail of fire and riot behind him. Remote churches and quiet populations were attacked with great injury. In the diocese of New York no open outrage took place, because Bishop Hughes counselled moderation and the ignoring of insult and abuse. Feeling was so intense, however, that private

and unreported bickerings became innumerable. The rowdies of the Knownothing stripe took every occasion to insult and assault peaceful Catholics, and took special pride in haunting the docks of the emigrant ships in order to bully and beat the latest arrivals.

The most distinguished sufferer from the anti-Catholic movement was Archbishop Cajetan Bedini, nuncio to Brazil, and bearer of an autograph letter from the Pope to the President of the United States. The exchange of courtesies between the Government and churchmen was at that time very active and pleasant, and showed how little importance they attached to the Knownothing ferment. Martin Van Buren, on a visit to Rome, had been received by the Pope and entertained for half an hour; while in England he had been bowed in to visit the Queen and immediately bowed out. President Pierce gave the nuncio a gracious welcome. The prelate was a handsome and distinguished man, and made a good impression everywhere. He had instructions to confer with the American bishops and to make a report on the condition of the Church in the United States. Archbishop Hughes thought favorably of having the nuncio prolong his stay in the country, and even sounded the Government on the feasibility of receiving a diplomatic representative of the Holy See. Many bishops had opposed the establishment of a papal nunciature in Washington believing that it would only fan the flames of bigotry. To the suggestion of the archbishop, Postmaster-General Campbell, a Catholic, replied with rather cold favor, and the matter was dropped. Meanwhile the arrival of the nuncio proved very acceptable to Gavazzi and the street-preachers, and they began a crusade against him and his master that for virulence far surpassed their highest achievements.

Archbishop Bedini travelled West in October, while Archbishop Hughes sailed away to Havana in search of rest and health. His critics charged him afterwards with having deserted the nuncio,

rather a poor charge against a prelate of his character. The Gavazzi minions followed the nuncio from place to place as far as Cincinnati. The country was infested at that date with numbers of exiled revolutionaries from Europe, wild and bloody fanatics, to whom the dagger was a beloved emblem and in frequent use. Riots marked the course of the prelate, and in Cincinnati twenty unfortunates were shot in an attack on the episcopal residence, the militia defending it against the vicious rioters. The nuncio, shocked at so frightful a tragedy, returned East, where Congress gave him a reception and the great vied with one another to remove the sad impressions of his trip West. In New York a countryman who revealed to him the existence of a plot to assassinate him, was said to have been slain the next night for betraying the plot. The disheartened and terrified prelate determined to leave the country at once. The police notified him of the presence of numerous European revolutionaries, who were watching the docks for his departure; the mayor advised a secret trip to Staten Island, from which he could connect with his steamer by a tug down the bay; and in this way the nuncio made his exit, mortified at the humiliating end of a mission that had opened so favorably.

Archbishop Hughes could not restrain his anger when he heard the story. He wrote afterwards to Bedini: "The part that afflicted me most was the mode of your leaving New York; and it is perhaps a presumptuous thought of mine which prompts me to say, that if I had been at home, you never should have been allowed to depart as you did. I know that it was a great trial to you, as it is a deep humiliation to us. And on reflection, I think that God may have ordained that I should be absent, in order that some greater evil might thereby be prevented; for be assured, that if I had been in New York, we should have taken carriage at my door, even an open one if the day had been fine enough, and gone by the

ordinary streets to the steamboat on which you were to embark. You will perhaps be astonished when I add that in such an event, notwithstanding the lying clamors of the telegraph wires and the newspapers, I do not believe that either violence or insult would have been offered either to you or to me or to any one of our party." It can be asserted at this date that the archbishop took the correct view of the matter. His presence known, the bigots would have reflected that open attack would be met with effective defence; and they had a great horror of seeing their own blood flow. Gavazzi and the revolutionary exiles were the promoters of the attack on the nuncio, and their triumph over his timidity gave them a passing glory. The Knownothing leaders won success after success in 1854. Thousands of voters, who had no sympathy with the anti-Catholic movement, entered their ranks for other reasons, and deserted after contributing to their success. The elections in Massachusetts and Delaware went to the new party, which also gained some congressmen in New York and polled one hundred and twenty-five thousand votes. The next year, 1855, they won the land commissioner of Texas, the legislature and comptroller of Maryland, all but carried the States of Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, and elected the governors and legislators of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, California, and Kentucky. This success warranted the leaders to undertake the formation of a national party and to prepare for the Presidential election of 1856.

Yet even at the height of their glory the true leaders of the people derided them and discounted their future. Horace Greeley described them as owning about "as many elements of persistence as an anti-cholera or anti-potato-rot party would have." Their platform proved the correctness of his derisive description. Its various planks attempted to please the old Native-Americans, the

rabid anti-Catholics, the Southern upholders of the fugitive-slave law, and the people of the North, and ended by pleasing none. Here were the anti-Catholic planks :

3. Americans must rule America, and to this end native-born citizens should be selected for all State, Federal, and municipal offices of Government employment, in preference to all others.

5. No person should be selected for political station who recognizes any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate, or power.

9. A change in the laws of naturalization, making a continued residence of twenty-one years an indispensable requisite for citizenship.

10. Opposition to any union between Church and State ; no interference with religious faith or worship ; and no test-oath for office.

At the general election which placed James Buchanan in the White House and confirmed the Democrats in power, the Know-nothings polled eight hundred and seventy-four thousand, five hundred and thirty-four votes out of a popular vote of four million, fifty-three thousand, nine hundred and sixty-seven, and sent five senators and twenty representatives to Congress. The rising Republican party, whose popularity had just begun, swamped Knownothingism. Its decline began from that election, and at the outbreak of the Civil War hardly a trace of it could be found.

It is hardly to be doubted that the violence of the Know-nothings would have resulted in frightful disorders had they won marked success in the election, or polled a respectable vote. The sudden rise of the Republican party, based on opposition to slavery, was a providential interposition in behalf of the nation.

Up to the disaster of 1856 the street-preachers increased in number and in rashness, inflaming the common minds with lurid denunciations of the Church, and urging them to violence. The press helped to fan the excitement, and special journals like *Ned Buntline's Own*, published in New York City, spread everywhere their lies, slanders and insults, inflammatory in the highest degree. Under the pen-name of Ned Buntline a hack-writer named Edward Judson turned out the most villainous screeds against all things Catholic. His imagination never failed. For years he had written scores of penny dreadfuls for the yellow publishers, varying his work by diatribes for the Native-Americans and the Knownothings. Archbishop Hughes successfully endeavored to keep his people in hand during the period of provocation. His pastoral letter on the situation expressed his temper perfectly and was obeyed literally by the people.

“It has been communicated to us that certain persons, claiming to be ministers of religion, have thought it proper to preach in the public streets in such a manner as to excite against us the hatred of our fellow-citizens who are not Catholics. The object of this communication is to request you to avoid all such preachings, and to leave the parties who approve of them to the entire and perfect enjoyment of their choice. The Catholic community of New York have merited well of their fellow-citizens by their uniform moderation and their respect for the laws of the country, and the authorities of its Government. I fear that this system of street-preaching is intended as a snare, and I hope that no Catholic will allow himself to be caught thereby. Let every man who chooses to preach in the public streets preach as often and as long as he will. But, as for you, dear brethren, shun the space in which his voice can be heard, lest, owing to human infirmity, a reasonable and just indignation might tempt any one of you to

exhibit symptoms of impatience or resentment, which would be a signal to your enemies, in consequence of which the laws and rules of peace and good order might be violated.

“I do not wish you to understand, dearly beloved brethren, that you should degrade yourselves one iota below the highest grade of American citizenship. If there be, as it has been insinuated, a conspiracy against the civil and religious rights which are secured to you by our Constitution and laws, defeat the purpose of that conspiracy by a peaceful and entirely legal deportment in all the relations of life. But, on the other hand, should such a conspiracy arise, unrebuked by the public authorities, to a point really menacing with destruction any portion of your property, whether your private dwellings, your churches, your hospitals, orphan asylums, or other Catholic institutions, then, in case of any attack, let every man be prepared, in God’s name, to stand by the laws of the country, and the authorities of the city, in defence of such rights and property. It is hardly to be supposed that such a contingency, under our free and equal laws, can possibly arise. Nevertheless, symptoms of so baneful a purpose are not by any means wanting. The consequences, in so populous and wealthy a city as New York, of a collision between parties, having for its basis or stimulant the spite of religious hatred, whether in the attack or in the defence, would be inconceivably disastrous. You, dearly beloved brethren, will be careful to avoid even the appearance of offence in regard to measures that might lead to such a result. But if, in spite of your forbearance, it should come, then it will be lawful for you to prove yourselves worthy of the rights of citizenship with which you are invested, by a noble defence of your own property, as the same is declared by the laws of the country.”

The irritated Catholics were soothed and fortified by this letter,

which sufficiently asserted their rights and their courage, warned the authorities and threatened the riotous with reprisals. Moreover, it helped the city authorities and the well-disposed in their honest endeavors to preserve the public peace. While the Know-nothing party appealed strongly to the feverish imaginations of the mob, the more thoughtful leaders and private citizens condemned it from the very beginning. Horace Greeley was outspoken in criticism and denunciation in the *Tribune*, Mr. John Francis, proprietor of the *Troy Times*, opened the columns of his paper to the letters of the Jesuit, Father Thebaud, against Knownothing pretensions. Everywhere right-minded ministers, citizens and political leaders shamed the bigots by their patriotic protest against the new political creed, and the persecution of the Catholics resulting from their slanderous propaganda.

In New York State there was little or no violence, but a great measure of speechifying at public meetings. At Metropolitan Hall, in 1853, a great meeting was held by the Knownothing managers to sympathize with a family named Madiari in Florence who were said to have been thrown into prison for merely reading the Bible. It was a meeting in favor of freedom of conscience, and proceeded to scarify the Catholic Grand Duke of Tuscany with gusto. Archbishop Hughes attended the meeting incognito. He found some resemblance between its temper and that of a report presented by the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate touching on American rights of conscience abroad, and he held both meeting and report up to scorn in the columns of the *Freeman's Journal*. This led to a long speech from General Cass, senator from Michigan, and also to a dignified but interesting controversy between archbishop and senator. As usual, the archbishop triumphed both in fact and argument, for he proved the Madiari to have been ordinary conspirators, using Bible-reading

as a blind for their treasonable designs, and he frightened off General Cass from the position of senatorial mouthpiece for the Evangelical Alliance, the latter a Protestant attempt at the performances of the English Exeter Hall.

The Civil War finally extinguished the last spark of the Know-nothing conflagration, but its effects continued a few years longer. The bigots holding official positions everywhere used their power against unfortunate Catholics that fell under their charge. A member of the New York board of charities smashed the furniture of the chapel in which the Catholic inmates of the almshouse worshipped. The Catholic children in public schools were often forced to read the Protestant Bible, and were subjected to cruelties from their Protestant school-fellows. Neighborly feelings were exchanged for that deep-seated scorn and hatred which still obtain among one set of Protestants in all parts of the country, and which the progress of Catholicity has only intensified. The school-books were made more and more anti-Catholic. In business and politics a barrier was erected against the admission of the Catholics into the professional circle, into positions of honor and profit. The consequences were not altogether harmful. Opposition and scorn helped to develop the persecuted; they fought with determination and spirit, and as American principles were entirely in their favor they won, and at the same time taught their opponents the true breadth of American principles, and the true meaning of that Constitution which seemed to have been made by man, and really was the inspiration of God, directing the course of humanity toward its goal. Of that wonderful instrument Archbishop Hughes was in his day the conscious and strongest interpreter. His letters and speeches and controversies, his private talks with high officials of Government, his actual leadership of his own people, his service to the Government, his dealings

with his brethren of the episcopate, teem with illustrations of the meaning of the Constitution. The Knownothing party may have been wiped out by many secondary causes, but primarily it perished because the soil of America cannot support such monstrosities.



Church of St. Mary

CHAPTER XV

THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE CHURCH



Rev. Isaac Hecker

THE first impressions of the Church, received by Americans from the little body of Catholics in New York State, were not favorable. The immigrant had little but his sturdy health and his faith to recommend him. His poverty and his ignorance, a British inheritance brought from Ireland, were popularly supposed to be the natural consequence of his religion. The British Government had not only stripped the Irish peasant of the privilege of learning how to read, and of saving a little money, but had also, through its agents, slandered him to the world, as poor and ignorant from choice. The Americans looked upon all Catholics, no matter of what nationality, as hopelessly inferior because of their faith. It was supposed that the enlightened religion of the country would soon absorb and destroy the corrupt practices of popery, as the natives would absorb the immigrants themselves.

For forty years the majority maintained this attitude of indifference towards the Catholics, and during that time the latter made scant progress, achieved nothing of a nature to attract attention. The churches were poor and the priests and congregations few and scattered. Trusteeism aroused public attention, and confirmed public indifference. It was just what might be expected, the wretched devotees of the Pope were fighting among themselves.

The arrival of the Orangemen changed the situation in 1825. They celebrated the victory of the Boyne by mobbing the Catholics of Greenwich Village, and were promptly fined next day by the judges. They brought with them the cheap Orange publications against O'Connell, the Irish and the Church. Their presence and their virulence stirred up the lesser and more violent preachers; a journal was started to voice their feelings, and thus the long-continued attack on the Church began. The Catholics were timid, but they had sufficient spirit to defend themselves. They, too, published journals and books, and sent their controversialists into the arena. In this arena Archbishop Hughes won his first fame.

Had the Orangemen and the uproarious preachers left the Catholics in peace the timid souls would have gone their way for half a century, in the obscurity so desired by cautious leaders. The noise of controversy does not seem to have made much impression beyond the circle of those immediately concerned. The intelligent, cultured and fervent Protestants of the time were satisfied with their religion, and quite sure that the papacy belonged to the monstrous superstitions of history, like Mahometanism. They were steeped in prejudice to the marrow, not disturbed at the sight of the cross-crowned steeples, at the opening of college, convent and seminary, at the nuns in the streets, at the occasional procession of robed priests and mitred bishop; and they attended with genteel curiosity the consecration of John Hughes and the imposing funeral of John Dubois. The few converts, like the Barber family, and the Dodge family, had none but accidental relations with the Catholics, and their conversion resembled that of the eunuch of Queen Candace rather than that of the first disciples of St. Peter. The impulse toward the Church came to them from the other side of the Atlantic,

where the Oxford movement had begun. In the Episcopal Seminary of New York City the influence of Pusey and Newman had great power. Father Clarence Walworth described its "peculiar atmosphere, which all who came to the seminary must necessarily breathe. Some called it Catholic, some called it Romish and superstitious; some called it a spirit of reform and return to true doctrine and genuine piety, and others regarded it as a relapse into religious darkness and barbarism."

The temper of the students and professors in this institution was very well illustrated by Walworth himself. He knew nothing of the local Catholics and their practices, and seems to have had no interest in Bishop Hughes or his clergy. He went one evening to hear a noted anti-popery preacher talk, one Dr. Cummings, and was disgusted by the bitterness, hatred and bigotry concentrated in his sermon. He acquired a disgust of Luther by reading D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*. All the students became more or less acquainted with George William Ward's *Ideal of a Christian Church*, and were greatly astonished at the difference of training between Episcopal and Catholic seminaries. A few read Moehler's *Symbolism*, from which book Walworth declared he got his best knowledge of the Catholic faith. He ever after preferred it above all others as a book to lend to thoughtful and studious Protestants. It presented the whole of Catholic doctrine, article by article, and did not pretend to teach Catholicity in six easy lessons; its author knew his age, and he knew that the Protestant mind could not be captured by a single syllogism; these are Walworth's own words. Everything pertaining to the Oxford movement was eagerly read, also the *British Critic*, a periodical of the Puseyites, the famous Tracts, and the beautiful *Lives of the English Saints*. Little by little these students learned to understand that Christ instituted a visible

Church, a tangible and approachable body; that He Himself officered it, gave it a complete body of doctrine to transmit, seven sacraments, a divine mission, a right to act in His name. At this point they needed only a gentle stimulus to send them into the bosom of the Church.

The opponents of the Oxford movement supplied it. The most pronounced of the Tractarians was one Arthur Carey, against whose ordination two prominent ministers protested on the ground that he was a Catholic in fact. His bishop ordained him in spite of the protest. At once a storm arose in the Episcopal sect, the papers were filled with angry controversy, the bishop was tried on charges and suspended, a Jesuit conspiracy was said to exist in the Chelsea seminary; and the result was that many students at once entered the Catholic Church. The *Quarterly Christian Spectator* for October, 1843, summed up the situation neatly: "Such an occurrence as the ordination of Mr. Carey with the protest of two eminent clergymen against him, on the ground of his being in effect a Roman Catholic, became the town's talk; and filled the newspapers, not only in the City of New York, but everywhere else. Nor did the news from Europe just about those days help to divert public attention from these matters. The astounding progress of O'Connell's movement for giving to popery its natural ascendancy in Ireland; the admired secession of one-half of the Established Church in Scotland; the universal agitation in England about Tractarianism, together with the University censure of Dr. Pusey himself at Oxford, gave to an ecclesiastico-religious question of this kind a new and surprising power of interesting the whole people."

From these statements it can be seen how little the local Catholics had to do with the interest manifested by Protestants of this stamp in the Catholic Church. The first of the Chelsea students to enter the fold was Edward Putnam, who became a priest in the

diocese of Albany, and closed his career in Maine. The next was Clarence Walworth, and along with him James J. McMaster. The former had a high social position in the State as the son of Chancellor Walworth, had been graduated as a lawyer, and had then taken up the preparation for the Episcopal ministry in Chelsea seminary, although his family were staunch Presbyterians. He had drifted with the Oxford movement until its direction brought him into the harbor of the Church. At that moment, owing to trouble with his eyes, he was in the Adirondacks, with a friend and relative, Rev. Edgar Prindle Wadhams, the Episcopal rector of Essex County, and both had been earnestly engaged in leading a monastic life at the Wadhams homestead. It was the dream of the two young men to found in that lovely wilderness a true monastery, after the Catholic fashion, yet within the Protestant fold; and they prayed and meditated and fasted, lived according to rule, and studied the lives of the saints, as a novitiate for the foundation of the future convent.

The rout of the High Church party after the conversion of Newman left them no choice but to surrender their dreams or enter the Catholic Church. So little acquaintance had Walworth with the Catholic clergy that he knew not how to take the proper steps for entrance into the Church. It was McMaster who found the way. He had stumbled upon the superior of the Redemptorists in New York City, Rev. Gabriel Rumpler, whom he described as a remarkable man, holy, wise, learned, and experienced. Young Walworth placed himself under the guidance of Father Rumpler, was delighted with his reception and all that he saw, and was received into the Church on the sixteenth of May, 1845. Although Bishop Hughes confirmed him shortly afterwards at St. Joseph's church on Sixth Avenue, he does not seem to have come into close touch with the prelate. McMaster a little later took up his

residence with the Redemptorists, and after instruction was also received into the Church. The young converts determined to join the Redemptorist community, and were received as novices. Another young man was received as a novice at the same time, a young New Yorker, also a convert, who had found his way into the Church by another route, Isaac Hecker.

"We little understood," writes Father Walworth, "at first the full value that lay concealed under the long yellow locks that hung down over his broad shoulders and behind the bright eyes, which shone with an openness of enthusiasm which made us smile." Hecker had found his way to the truth almost by his own reasoning, after a turn at social philosophy and a brief experience of Brook Farm and Transcendentalism. His mind suffered from no conventions, and his training had been his own. He was of German blood, Walworth of English stock, and McMaster of Scotch descent; he knew nothing of Puseyism and the convulsion in the Anglican communion; Walworth possessed all the grace of his blood; McMaster was an iconoclast, impetuous, stormy, extravagant, and sincere; to say the least they formed a rare trio, united in the faith, and now bound by the ties of the Redemptorist brotherhood. They were sent to Belgium to make their novitiate, and on the way McMaster made a flying visit to Newman at Littlemore. He found the great man with a book in one hand and a sandwich in the other, acquainted him with his own conversion and the cause of his journey, and after describing for Newman the career of his beautiful disciple, Carey, urged him to write the story of his life. Of course Newman declined the task on the ground that only an American writer could do him justice. The novices finished their course properly in Belgium. McMaster discovered that the religious life was not his vocation, and took up journal-

ism in New York; the other two were ordained and sent back to their native land in due time to preach the gospel to their own people.

The entrance of Newman into the Church in October of 1845 undoubtedly hastened the final change for his American followers. The next convert of importance was Rev. Edgar P. Wadhams, the founder of the Adirondack monastery, which was to have done so much for the Episcopal sect. He had received his clerical training in the Chelsea seminary, and had deep sympathy with the Oxford movement, but had not mingled much with its promoters. The story of his attempt to get proper guidance, when he made up his mind to become a Catholic, illustrates sharply some conditions of the time. The intercourse of Catholics and Protestants was anything but intimate and cordial, and the abuse heaped upon the former, their simple condition, and the reticence of the clergy, had made them suspicious of the average Yankee. Wadhams visited the nearest priest and informed him of his purpose and desire. Their conference was brief, and discouraging. He was referred to remoter authorities, and as he turned away the clergyman remarked to a parishioner: "Look after that young man; I wonder what he's up to!" The next attempt he made in Albany at St. Mary's Church, but found the priest too busy to attend to his wants just then. He was finally received into the Church by the Sulpicians of Baltimore, with whom he made his studies for the priesthood; and after a fine career in Albany under Bishop McCloskey he was made the first bishop of Ogdensburg, a diocese which he administered faithfully until his death in 1891.

The determination of the Low Churchmen to show no quarter to the Puseyites led to other conversions of importance. Attached to the diocese of Maryland under the Episcopal Bishop Whitting-

ham were three young students in deep sympathy with the Oxford movement; Dwight Lyman, Francis Baker, and Nathaniel A. Hewit, the son of a Congregational minister of New Haven, and at one time a Congregationalist himself. The bishop had strong leanings towards Catholic doctrine and practice, was the first to wear long cassocks, and quietly encouraged his young men in their evident likings for things Catholic. As they were unable to introduce Catholic practices, having no standing as clergymen, they found a well-disposed rector in a poor district of Baltimore who permitted them to remodel the interior of his church into a Catholic shape, to erect something that resembled an altar, and to introduce Catholic devotions. They were having a joyful time, when the members of the congregation protested, and then began to withdraw; the church and pastor were threatened with ruin, and the rector's wife put an end to the affair by banishing the students and restoring the chancel to its former Protestant bareness. In due time the three young men were ordained in spite of their strong Puseyite methods, and the High Church party began to grow strong in the diocese. When that party was attacked and routed in New York, its opponents elsewhere grew bold; Bishop Whittingham was attacked on charges of Ritualism; and in order to save himself from serious trouble he put a sudden end to all novelties of worship. His clergy obeyed him for the most part. Hewit promptly entered the Church in Charleston, in Holy Week of 1846, Dwight Lyman soon followed suit, but not until 1853 did Francis Baker give up hope. He was then received into the Church by Father Hewit, now a priest, and was ordained a priest three years later in the Baltimore cathedral. The three old friends, Hewit, Lyman, and Baker, a few days later celebrated a solemn mass of thanksgiving in the church of St. Alphonsus. Two of them had joined the Redemptorist community. These young men, like Walworth and

Wadhams, had found their way into the Church without any acquaintance with Catholics.

Rev. William Everett, the friend and adviser of the Puseyites, found his way to the truth about the year 1850; he had been a minister of standing in the city, and at his conversion joined the diocese of New York, became pastor of the Nativity parish, and labored there until his death at an advanced age in 1897. One of the noted ministers of the period was Rev. John Murray Forbes, a man of ability, popularity, and social position. His becoming a Catholic shocked the Protestant community. There was some difficulty in ordaining him a priest, as he had been married and had some children. Yet all difficulties were overcome, his children were properly provided for, and he himself in time became the honored rector of St. Ann's church. He brought with him into the true fold many others, among them Rev. Thomas S. Preston, a young man of solid character and high ability. The contrast in the careers of these two men was startling. Father Forbes in a few years returned to the sect which he had left, and died in its communion. If his conversion had been a sensation, his relapse startled the entire country.

Archbishop Hughes wrote to a friend: "His fall has been to me a blow of chastisement; for I had rashly blamed other prelates for having ordained too hastily converted persons. My own turn of humiliation has arrived in the case of Dr. Forbes. But I have this consolation, that there was no impediment with regard to the means of supporting his children which had not been arranged, on his own testimony, even before I allowed him to think of the Catholic priesthood. Notwithstanding this, as time went on after his ordination, I discovered by personal and intimate observation that he was influenced by the desire of honors, ease, emolument, and distinction, which it was impossible to afford him. This

discovery of his character, besides other influences, prevented me from treating him at any time except with the forbearance, and I might add the affection, the same as if he had been my son. All the details connected with his career would make a small volume, but they are unnecessary. There is one thing, however, I must say that he has left no reproach either against his character, or on his exercise of the ministry, which could create a scandal, or cause him to be ranked among the degraded apostates who have from time to time forsaken our Holy Mother." Very little comment was passed on the event by either party, and it was soon forgotten. Father Preston, who had acted as the archbishop's secretary, succeeded Dr. Forbes in the rectorship of St. Ann's, and occupied the position until his death in 1893; he advanced from honor to honor, filling in turn the important offices of the diocese under Cardinal McCloskey and Archbishop Corrigan; until he became vicar-general and a domestic prelate of the first rank. He was the author of several volumes of carefully written sermons, and died in the highest esteem for labor and virtue.

A still greater sensation than the Forbes event was the conversion of Rt. Rev. Levi Silliman Ives, the Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina, together with several of his disciples. The bishop was a fearless man, and in the development of his views found it necessary to establish a monastic foundation in his diocese, where the long-forgotten virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience might have a choice garden in which to grow, and the ideal life of the monk find illustration. He established the community of the Holy Cross. Besides this institution, and the Adirondack convent of Wadhams, there was a third in the wilds of Wisconsin, called Nashotah Monastery. Naturally the opponents of Puseyism fiercely attacked these examples of Roman corruption. The Wis-

consin monastery came to grief through the marriage of its chief monks to charming women, the head of the enterprise marrying his bishop's daughter. Two or three faithful ones fled East, and became Catholic priests. One of them, Father McCurry, became a priest in the diocese of Albany and died at an early age at Coopers-town about 1865.

The Holy Cross Monastery in North Carolina came to a less ignoble end than Nashotah ; its founder and several of his monks entered the Catholic Church and for many years the distinguished and fearless bishop lived as a citizen of New York, engaged in works of charity, always deeply interested in the work of sanctification. He had the largest share in the founding of the Catholic Protectory in behalf of abandoned, wild, and unruly children. His wife became a Catholic with him. Her father had been Bishop Hobart of New York, in the time of Bishop Connolly, the same who said to Virgil Barber of the Catholics, when that fervent minister asked him if Catholics could be saved: "They are of the old church, you know. But they work too hard to be saved. One can be saved without taking so much trouble." With Bishop Ives there entered the Church one Donald McLeod, whose name has lingered until this day in the common memory through his books on the Blessed Virgin. He became a priest, and was killed, not many years after his conversion, by a railroad train, as he was on his way to a dying man with the Blessed Sacrament.

For ten or fifteen years the exiles from the High Church came slowly into the fold. Rev. James Roosevelt Bayley, member of a famous family, pastor of a New York church, and a relative of Mother Seton, left the Episcopal sect in 1842, was ordained priest, and served as secretary to Archbishop Hughes until he was consecrated Bishop of Newark in 1853 ; he died Archbishop of Balti-

more after a distinguished career. A noted professor of Columbia College, William Henry Anderson, was president of the St. Vincent de Paul society, and gave to St. Gabriel's parish the land upon which its church buildings stand. Jedediah Huntington, the most brilliant of the entire group, was a journalist and novelist of fine quality, and his remarkable stories have long held a firm place in the popular libraries : *Rosemary*, *Alban*, and *The Forest*. He also edited the *Catholic Metropolitan Record* for a time, and held a high place in the esteem of the community, although unfortunately this esteem did not bring him a suitable income. The Military Academy at West Point furnished its share of converts, among them the noted General Rosecrans and Lieutenant George Deshon, who was later the superior of the Paulist community until his death in 1904.

In the West the wave of change made converts of the famous Richards family, whose representative in our day is Dr. Havens Richards, sometime rector of Georgetown University. Last of all came the Rev. Benjamin Whitcher, who had been deeply interested in the Oxford movement, but never got to the point of conversion until he had been in the Episcopal ministry for ten years. During that time he and his wife had come into prominence as joint authors of the *Widow Bedott Papers*, a series of humorous sketches of American country life. Father Walworth, as a Redemptorist preaching missions everywhere, found him in his parish near Utica, New York, and promptly inquired why he had not long ago become a Catholic. He could not answer the question. Said Walworth : "Ten long years of your life have passed away, and here you are still, looking one way and growing the other. How can you do it ? How can your conscience bear it ?" Said Whitcher, mournfully : "Conscience ! don't talk of conscience. I don't know that I have any conscience left." In a few weeks he entered the Church under

direction of Bishop MacFarlane of Hartford, at that date pastor in Utica.

The converts that came through Puseyism and devotion to the great Newman were a remarkable body of men and women, but towering above them all in the strength and originality of their character were Isaac Hecker and Orestes Brownson, who had found their way to truth by different roads and outside the impulse of the Oxford movement. Brownson and Hecker made their profession of faith the same year, 1844, the former in Boston before Bishop Fitzpatrick. Hecker had little acquired knowledge, but a tremendous will to find the truth, and then to transmit it to others, somewhat of a mystic and a seer, to whom the whole world was nothing when the end had to be attained. Brownson was a logician and a philosopher, a lover of *a priori* reasonings, who had reasoned himself to the door of the Church from the premises of history and such doctrines as were generally accepted in his time; a great intellect, far ahead of his day, and utterly unappreciated by it, because its pleasure just then lay in chattering about Emerson and his disciples, under the inspiration of Margaret Fuller, and many other fluencies of that now forgotten period.

The literary and printing coterie from 1845 to 1875 dabbled and traded in words, not ideas; it made great noises over the decay of the Christian idea, and called them a revolution; and its acquaintance with history, philosophy, and logic, its ability to reason and to appreciate reasoning, were of the same character as its small literary talent. To read its printed vaporings in the light of the present gives one a feeling of hopelessness that men should be such incapacities and not know it. The great mind of Brownson cut its way through all the patchwork philosophies and fallacies of the time, Presbyterianism, Universalism, Unitarianism, Socialism, and built its own way to the truth. The watchful and sympathetic

Catholics saw him coming long before he himself noticed the last conclusion of his arguments, and special prayers were offered for his safe arrival. He addressed himself to Bishop Fenwick at first, the same who twenty years previous had received the Barber family into the Church; but death removed the bishop from the scene at that moment, and to his successor, Bishop Fitzpatrick, fell the honorable task of introducing Brownson into the ways of the faith. Numerous changes of opinion had given the convert a bad reputation; it was popularly supposed his next onward step would be into Buddhism or infidelity; but the remaining thirty-three years of his life were absolutely devoted to the exposition and defence of the Catholic faith, and of the political principles upon which his country was founded.

The delight with which these converts were received by the Catholic body can be easily imagined. Their conversion was a more potent rebuke to Knownothingism than even the reverses which that dark political heresy suffered at the polls. The converts were given the first places in all gatherings, and their names pointed many an argument in favor of the faith. The welcome, however, had at times an element of suspicion; the Yankees had shown a peculiar hardness of bigotry like unto adamant; and the suspicious said even of Brownson, we fear he has the bad drop in him. There was much uncertainty as to what these new-comers would do. Yet the suspicion did the converts no harm. Some of them mounted to the highest honors. Bayley became Archbishop of Baltimore, Wadhams Bishop of Ogdensburg, Wood Archbishop of Philadelphia. There was no reason for uncertainty about the converts. They were fearless and aggressive men, confident in their birth and blood, and fully acquainted with their rights as citizens; and as fully determined to exercise those rights according to the Constitution. They were not to be cowed by the Know-

nothings, or tied to a policy of silence. None knew better than they the fitness of the great Church to deal with American conditions; and none the great need of that Church to a people insensibly drifting away from Christianity. It was evident to all the world in 1840 that the Protestant idea no longer appealed to some millions of Americans, and evangelists were convinced that preaching it would effect nothing. The converts, enraptured with what they had found in the Catholic communion, were not to be restrained from making their joy known to all the brethren. They printed books detailing their experiences on the road to the truth. Walworth wrote *The Gentle Skeptic*, and preached fiery sermons; Hecker, his *Aspirations of Nature*; Bishop Ives, his *Trials of a Mind*; Huntington, his *Gropings after Truth*; Brownson, his *Convert*; and each one did something to testify to his convictions.

Strangely enough a large number of the converts found themselves in time laboring in and around the City of New York. About one thing they were all agreed: the power of the press to spread the news. The Catholic body had never come to their depth of conviction on that point, and has not yet after a century of example become convinced of its power. James A. MacMaster bought the *Freeman's Journal* from Archbishop Hughes in 1847, and from that time did great and picturesque service for the faith full forty years. Mighty Brownson established his *Review* in the metropolis, and sent out his wonderful papers for nearly thirty years. Maximilian Oertel published a German Catholic paper, and did for the Germans what MacMaster was doing for the English-speaking people. By a strange series of events Isaac Hecker had cut loose from the Redemptorists and founded his community of St. Paul, for the preaching of the gospel to the non-Catholics. Joined with him in time were Augustine Hewit and Francis Baker, Clarence Walworth and George Deshon; and others converted to the faith

came trooping in. This new missionary society made the printing-press part of its machinery. A magazine called the *Catholic World* was founded, also a house for the printing of the best books and tracts and pamphlets needed by Catholics and their neighbors.

The activity, energy, and originality of these converts startled the ancient Catholics, some of whom got satirical over the new method of preaching the gospel. The booming of the great guns of MacMaster and Hecker and Brownson, the roar of the light artillery of Preston, Huntington, Walworth and others, made the timid fearful of what the Knownothings would do when they got time to attend to these people. Archbishop Hughes, leading the van in the public press and in the Government circle, must have felt enthusiasm at the staff of propagators sent to him so unexpectedly by Providence. The criticism of the mossbacks was met by sharp rebuke from Brownson and MacMaster, and a controversy grew among the brethren, sprouting from racial and temperamental differences. In these domestic controversies the never-failing cry of heresy was raised, and another, of innovation. Archbishop Hughes rebuked all parties, and bade them be silent and more careful in speech and epithet. He publicly rebuked the great Brownson for his speech on American methods for reaching American people, and for his appeal to give the young Catholic natives a chance in the arena, where the Irish and the Germans showed a strong taste for keeping all others unemployed. Nevertheless he stood by Brownson in the hour of need, and supported the Paulists by his favor.

Had he not, the failure to appreciate the great work being done, would have darkened his fame, and cast a reflection on his greatness of mind. The converts were the hammers, the battering rams that beat upon the walls of Protestant prejudice. It seems incredible

that walls so strong and enduring could have been built up among any people in the Christian time. Yet here were the Americans believing all the lies, fictions, slanders, absurdities that had been three centuries forming against the character and the origin of the Church of Rome. Before the Church could take her stand properly before the American millions that wall had to be battered down. The converts of the Oxford movement made the first breach, with skill, enthusiasm, and ability. They were led by three great men: MacMaster the journalist, Brownson the philosopher, and Hecker the typical missionary. Of these three, Hecker, keenest in vision and spiritual knowledge, took the first place by his foundation of a strong community to carry on the direct work of preaching the gospel to the Americans.



Convent of Sacred Heart

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLOSE OF THE HUGHES ADMINISTRATION



Rev. William Starrs

THE Civil War, whose terrible shadows hung over the land from the beginning of the year 1860, arrested all development in every department, and either threw things into confusion, or brought them to a standstill. For Knownothingism it meant extinction, the snuffing out of the lesser in the greater interest. For the Catholics it meant freedom from persecution, and the opportunity to convince the most obstinate of their obvious loyalty.

The children of the household were at one another's throats on the eternal question of a division of the spoils ; the naturalized citizens were not concerned with the spoils, but with the welfare of the great Republic, whose principles and laws had given them a home, the blessing of true liberty, and a chance in life ; although the American people, less generous than their Constitution, forced them at times to fight for their constitutional rights and privileges. The grand majority of the Catholics in the country, on grounds of patriotism and common sense, believed in the maintenance of the Union ; it was half instinct with them, for they had seen enough of disunion, of schism, of the wretched heresy which had split Christianity in twain, and had torn itself into new fragments with every decade. They could see no good reason for the exaggeration of State rights, and they had no sympathy with the views and methods of the Abolitionists. The common crowd

thought that sensible men had no business going to war over the Africans. But apart from all other questions, they took their stand by the Union.

Archbishop Hughes led the way as usual. He had seen the war looming up early, and had used his influence to help avert it. He wrote to Mr. Cameron, the Secretary of War, in October of 1861: "There is being insinuated in this part of the country an idea to the effect that the purpose of this war is the abolition of slavery in the South. If that idea should prevail among a certain class, it would make the business of recruiting slack indeed. The Catholics, so far as I know, whether of native or foreign birth, are willing to fight to the death for the support of the Constitution, the Government, and the laws of the country. But if it should be understood that, with or without knowing it, they are to fight for the abolition of slavery, they will turn away in disgust from the discharge of what would otherwise be a patriotic duty." Brownson about the same date recommended the freeing of the slaves as a war-measure, and the archbishop criticized him and the Abolitionists severely in the columns of his paper, the *Metropolitan Record*. Once the fight was on and all hope of compromise ended, he threw all his influence into the work of supporting the Federal Government. His position was described in a letter to Bishop Lynch of Charleston, and as it represents the attitude of the Catholic majority it may be quoted: "I am an advocate for the sovereignty of every State in the Union within the limits recognized and approved of by its own representative authority when the Constitution was agreed upon. As a consequence, I hold that South Carolina has no State right to interfere with the internal affairs of Massachusetts; and, as a further consequence, that Massachusetts has no right to interfere with South Carolina or its domestic and civil affairs, as one of the sovereign States of this now threatened Union. But the Con-

stitution having been formed by the common consent of all the parties engaged in the framework and approval thereof, I maintain that no State has a right to secede, except in the manner provided for in the document itself."

This was a shrewd statement of the case, and history and custom have since confirmed his position. The Constitution did not contemplate secession in any form, and therefore never mentioned it. To another southern bishop he wrote a telling criticism of the actual conditions in a brief space. ". . . certainly there is a great difference in principle between the two sections of the country. The North has not been required to do anything new, to take any oath, to support any new flag; it has kept on the even tenor of its way. The South, on the contrary, has taken upon itself to be judge in its own cause, and to execute, if necessary, by force of arms, its own decision. In a constitutional country this means either revolution or rebellion, since there are tribunals agreed upon by North and South, and supported by both for a period of more than seventy years. When these tribunals are set aside, and men appeal to the sword, the Federal Government has only to abdicate, or meet sword with sword the Catholics of the North have behaved themselves with great prudence, moderation, and a dignity which has, for the moment at least, inspired, among the high and the low, great respect for them as a religious body in this Union. I regret that I cannot say as much for the Catholics, and for some of their clergy, in the South." Having settled his position in theory he proceeded to act in accordance with it.

The Federal Government was reaching out on all sides for assistance, its members fully conscious of the terrific struggle about to be made, and harassed by the ignorance and inertia of the people in general; and the support of such a prelate as Hughes

meant very much at any time. When asked his advice he gave it with a thoroughness and frankness that surprised and delighted the officials, while it made him many enemies. He urged upon the Government the necessity of surrounding Washington with an army of at least one hundred thousand men, thinking it better to put forth all possible strength at the outset in order that the war might be short. "Let the question of the rights of the Federal Government over the whole country be settled once and forever. Let there be no compromise until the States shall be disposed to return to their allegiance to the Federal Government, which they themselves contributed to create, and from which nothing new in the legislation of the Federal Government has given them the slightest pretext for seceding; no recognition of the pretended Government of the Confederate States; no negotiation with them as such; but ample kindness towards the States, taken one by one."

As he had thus early measured the situation and described the main issue, so also he took the measure of Lincoln long before his true greatness had become evident even to the members of his cabinet. He wrote to Seward in October of 1861: "I take it that the President is the responsible man of this nation. No President has ever been so severely tested as he. A great conspiracy of which he knew nothing was in existence when he was elected. It burst forth almost immediately after his inauguration. There was no preparation to meet its extravagance, for it was a foolish enterprise, and a snare sprung upon him before he could be aware of it. Things are changed, however, and the country begins to know, if it did not know before, that Mr. Lincoln is not less than equal to the emergency which has been prepared for the first months of his administration. . . . There is only one word I would add, and that is, that in your effort to bring back the Southern States to their condition before the war, you would, as far as it could be con-

sistent with the high principles of supreme government, be as patient and as considerate toward the State authorities of this so-called Confederacy as possible. Conquest is not altogether by the sword. Statesmanship, and especially in our circumstances, may have much to do with it. But no backing down of the Federal Government."

It was hardly a surprise when President Lincoln urgently requested Archbishop Hughes to visit Europe as a special envoy of the Government, and to do his best to counteract the influence of the Confederate agents, who had begun a propaganda abroad which it was hoped would lead to European interference in behalf of the rebellious States. He was duly accredited to France, as the fear had arisen that Napoleon would join with England in a scheme to recognize the South as independent and put an end to the war. The archbishop accepted the mission out of pure patriotism, and from devotion to the Church. At that time there was nothing serious in the position of the North, no crisis had occurred, and the war was looked upon as a fairly easy matter for settlement within a year or two at the most. Dr. Hughes might have declined what could be only a thankless task, from the personal standpoint, and still have done service to the cause. His brother-prelates disliked his intimacy with Government, and actually denounced his mission to France as likely to involve them in trouble later on; the South took the care to have its envoys at Rome counteract his influence; he was bitterly criticized by the Catholic papers of the South; abroad he would likely be annoyed and hindered and coldly received by the imperial government; and much would be done to turn the venture into ridicule and failure.

The archbishop foresaw these consequences, yet he would not refuse the President's request. He saw around him too much

indifference to the terrible situation of the Republic, which he felt was bound to grow worse instead of better ; he thought it a time for patriotism to forget personal suffering, criticism, ridicule and the shame of failure ; he felt highly honored by the confidence placed in him ; he knew that whatever service he could render would redound to the glory and comfort of the Catholic people in later times ; and he wished to set an example which all might follow. He accepted the mission and set out for Europe without delay, determined to do his best and to achieve something for his country no matter what the odds. The odds were the lack of sympathy at home, the indifference, dislike, and jealousy abroad, and his own condition, for he was slowly dying of Bright's disease. In describing the motives which led him to accept the mission to France, for the head of Propaganda, Cardinal Barnabo, he wrote among other things: "I made known to the ministers in Washington that I could accept no official appointment from them ; that it was not in their power to bestow any distinction upon me equal to that which the Church had already conferred ; that I could not undertake to fulfil any written instructions ; but that if I came I should be left to my own discretion, to say and to do what would be most likely to accomplish good, or at least to prevent evil. Then they said that I should go with a *carte blanche*, do and say for the interests of the country, prevention of war, and interests of humanity, anything that I should think proper."

In the same letter he gave two reasons why President Lincoln honored him with this mark of confidence. "First : The Government knows that the people of America, both of the North and the South, whether Catholics or Protestants, have great confidence in me, as one who will never say anything but what he knows or believes to be true ; that although loyal to the only legitimate government in America, I am regarded as no enemy of the South ;

that, as the cabinet at Washington believe, more reliance would be placed on my statements, on account of my being a Catholic prelate, than would be placed on the words of any official minister of the United States, either in Paris, or London, or elsewhere. Second: The Government at Washington were pleased to think that, in requesting me to accept this mission, they were paying a great compliment to the whole Catholic people of the United States and they wished to give me also a mark of their confidence which might go far, as an example for future administrations to be well-disposed towards the Catholics, and by this act to condemn that spurious faction who, but a few years ago, under the name of Know-nothings, attempted to treat the Catholics of America as disloyal citizens, unworthy of the equal privileges which the laws of the country extend to all its inhabitants."

He first travelled through England, finding the people whom he met rather favorable to his views, but quite convinced that the South would win, and that a peaceable separation from the North was the best way out of the war. At the American legation in Paris he was received coldly by Minister Dayton; the minister of foreign affairs did not waste any time on him or his mission; he was promised a speedy interview with the Emperor Napoleon, and meanwhile he went about Paris, the guest of its most distinguished citizens from the archbishop down, to whom he described the numbers and character of the American people, and pointed out the folly of European intervention. He found everywhere an astonishing ignorance of the American country, an ignorance remarkable in itself, and still more so by its duration, for it continued up to the end of the century, to the conclusion of the war with Spain.

The archbishop learned very quickly that the diplomats of the American embassy, working in conjunction with the French

foreign minister, had no intention of letting him have an interview with the emperor. Therefore he wrote direct to Napoleon III for permission to speak with him on American affairs, and was at once invited to the palace. For over an hour he repeated to the emperor and his consort what he had been saying to the people everywhere, urged him to act as arbiter in the dispute that had just risen between England and the United States, and impressed him certainly with one fact, pregnant and indisputable: that the American Republic had the earnest support of the Catholic hierarchy and the people in its struggle for its own integrity. There must have been sour faces at the foreign office and the American embassy the next morning when the news of the interview went abroad. For nine months he travelled over Europe, discussing with all classes the American war, and instructing them in the history and conditions, the resources and the determination of the Republic. He had the ear of Rome, where all the world gathered at intervals; diplomats listened to him with astonishment, for these are the men who seem to know everything, and are always annoyed at the knowledge or the discovery of their own limitations; the information supplied by the archbishop disturbed their conclusions about the American war. Not a few held him responsible for the failure of France and England to unite in aid of the Confederacy. He hoped the accusation was true, but knew that it was impossible to learn just what effect his mission had upon the courts of Europe. His return home in the August of 1862 was made the occasion of a public reception from the New York municipality, and of the most flattering attentions from all classes of people. President Lincoln showed his appreciation of his service by intimating to the Pope that, since he could give the archbishop no honor which he would accept, His Holiness might find the proper way, and the American Government would look upon his action with the utmost pleasure.

Pope Pius did for a time entertain the notion of making him cardinal, but dropped it later, probably upon the representations made to him from different quarters in which opposition to the archbishop was more than strong. Undoubtedly had Dr. Hughes lived to see the triumph of the Republic in 1865 the honor of the cardinalate would have crowned his career and properly rebuked his cautious opponents.

The Sunday after his arrival he delivered a discourse in the cathedral on the incidents of his mission abroad, and took occasion to suggest at the close of his address a general conscription of citizens instead of the slow method of enlistment then in use, on the ground that the burden of defence would be thus better equalized among citizens, and the multitude of soldiers would soon put an end to a war which threatened to drag along for years. The speech made a sensation. Horace Greeley in the *Tribune*, the editors of the *Catholic Mirror* in Baltimore, and many others, made bitter attacks on the archbishop as the fomenter of war, eager for bloodshed. His reply to these gentlemen was vigorous as usual, and somewhat enlightening at the same time. In giving his reasons for bringing the war to a speedy close by overwhelming the South with armies, he mentioned one which rather startled the people.

“What I am now about to say is more than I can vouch for of my own personal knowledge. It was stated to me on my return that the employers of those men (Irish Catholic citizens employed in large establishments), immediately after the war broke out, suspended their factories and other departments in which human labor had been employed, to compel these Irish and Catholic operatives to enlist, in order that their families might not starve; and that all this was adroitly accomplished under the plea that war had rendered it necessary to suspend all manufacturing establishments; that this pretended necessity was only for the purpose of

sending fighting men to the field, by which the neighborhood would be relieved from the presence of workmen of foreign birth ; that, in point of fact, as soon as necessity drove that class away, their places were promptly supplied by other operatives ; whilst, in the meantime, such manufacturers and traffickers upon the public calamities of civil war have been vastly more prosperous than ever before. Sooner than witness such mean and base tricks upon unfortunate laborers, I was then, and am now, prepared to approve of a thousand conscriptions openly appointed by the Government; provided, however, that the same shuffling and low trickery shall not be employed to expose the poor to the dangers of battle, and leave the wealthy to become wealthier in their quiet homes." Although the archbishop was careful to state this fact on hearsay, he had the very best evidence in its support ; and the trick itself was so thoroughly Puritan, expressed so artistically the hate of a certain class for the Irish and the Catholics, that one might accept it without other evidence than the statement carried.

The Government had immense difficulty in enlisting sufficient troops to carry on the war. That throbbing patriotism described by the school-books and popular histories, and the burning desire to fight for the defence of the Union, were not in existence in 1863, and the State governors had to resort to every means to furnish their quota of soldiers. Even their powers failed, and it required the conscription, or draft, by order of the Government, to fill up the ranks of the armies in the field. The enrollment of the great armies both of the North and the South is in itself a history. The people were divided in opinion as to the merits of the struggle ; the Democrats were not at all inclined to increase the glory of the party in power, and entertained hopes of settling the dispute by negotiation. In this feeling they were strengthened by the dismissal of their hero from the command of the army, General

McClellan, plainly on the ground that he would be a Presidential candidate in 1864; and the acts of the Republican Government officials did not always tend to develop and strengthen sympathy with the President and his cabinet in their great work of maintaining the integrity of the Union.

In fact to the end of the year 1863 some millions of Northern citizens looked upon the conduct of the war rather as directed by the desire to entrench the Republican party in power than by the spirit of a true patriotism. Incompetent generals were placed in command of armies on the strength of their political influence, and competent generals were forced out of command and often out of the army. The general discontent expressed itself vigorously and unlawfully in the New York riots of the summer of 1863. For a whole week an irresponsible mob went about the city attacking colored people, some of whom were hanged to the lamp-posts, destroying property, robbing houses of business, and exciting such terror on the part of the citizens that business was suspended and the militia called out to preserve the peace. An officer of the militia, by whose order the mob was fired upon, was fatally wounded by the rioters, who caught him away from his command. Father Clowry, the pastor of St. Gabriel's Church, who happened to be in the vicinity, went to his rescue, in the face of the mob, who wished to complete the murder, placed Colonel O'Brien on a wheelbarrow and wheeled him down to Bellevue Hospital, where he was given over to the care of the surgeons and died in peace. The mob tried to burn the Tribune Building and sought for Horace Greeley to hang him. The casualties of a single week fixed upon the city a loss of millions of dollars, and but for the energetic action of the governor, Horatio Seymour, in sending troops to the city, in arresting and punishing the guilty, in searching for secreted arms and ammunition, and finally wiping

out the movement and its leaders, the metropolis had run a close risk of destruction.

The plea of the rioters was opposition to the conscription or draft. Governor Seymour appealed to Archbishop Hughes to use his influence to quiet the mob, many of whom were said to be Catholics. From his residence in Madison Avenue Dr. Hughes addressed the crowd which had assembled at his printed invitation in the morning papers ; and at other points his priests took occasion to influence the disturbers into order. One clergyman harangued them in City Hall Park ; Father Deshon, the Paulist, headed off a mob on Tenth Avenue which had just formed for the purpose of attacking suspected persons ; and Father Hewit, another Paulist, remained on guard all day in St. Luke's hospital, at the request of its superintendent, who feared an assault on the institution. The patriotic and open attitude of Archbishop Hughes in his support of the Government had its natural effect upon his people. The city at the opening of the war was the home of the ardent young souls who had been exiled from Ireland for various attempts to throw off the English yoke. Among them were men like Thomas F. Meagher and Michael Corcoran, lovers of military glory. The latter was colonel of the Irish regiment, the Sixty-Ninth, at the time the Prince of Wales visited New York and was entertained by the municipality. Corcoran refused to obey the orders which required his regiment to parade in honor of the prince, on the ground that he could not pay such an honor to the son of a sovereign under whose rule Ireland was suffering intensely. He was promptly jailed and court-martialed, but the war breaking out in the meantime the court-martial was dismissed and Corcoran was allowed to lead his regiment to the front.

These two men, Corcoran and Meagher, stirred up the enthusiasm of the Irish, and formed by their own efforts the famous

Irish Brigade and the Corcoran Legion, which went through the war with the highest honors. Both rose to the rank of brigadier-general. At the battle of Bull Run the Sixty-Ninth had the honor of rendering distinguished service to General Sherman and General McDowell. The Confederate cavalry, driving all before them in an incredible stampede, came upon the regiment formed to receive them in the usual hollow square. Within this square Sherman and McDowell sought shelter both from the attack and the stampede; the cavalry broke into pieces against the determined soldiers and retired; before the regiment could get over to the right of their position, as the commander ordered, an avalanche of flying troops, wagons and ambulances descended upon them and swept them away like a dam before a flood. Corcoran, with a few soldiers, was captured by the enemy and languished for a year in Southern prisons before he was exchanged. The good fighting qualities of the Irish regiments and their success on the field stirred up secretly the old Knownothing feeling against them in certain quarters, and not a little was done to deprive them of honors well earned and to belittle their service. Archbishop Hughes wrote to Seward on the matter: "With regard to Colonel Corcoran, I would advise his appointment as a brigadier-general, even if he should never return from his honorable captivity. I have discovered symptoms of wounded feelings among his countrymen, arising from the fact that in the different official reports the Sixty-Ninth has scarcely been alluded to. A slight is for them worse than a blow. Corcoran's appointment as a brigadier-general, even though a prisoner, would heal the wounds of their *amour propre*."

The archbishop did not favor such distinctions in the army as the Irish Brigade: "Our papers have paragraphs every day about what is called the 'Irish Brigade,' intended for military service during the war," he wrote to Seward. "The thing itself

may be all correct, but I would respectfully suggest that the name is not indicative of good. I think regiments and brigades ought to be distinguished by numbers, and companies by alphabetical distinction. I am of the opinion that if there be Irish brigades, German brigades, Scotch brigades, Garibaldian brigades in our army there will be trouble among the troops even before the enemy comes in sight. I am aware that it will require a good deal of management and delicacy to put aside these distinctions of foreign nationalities, still I think it can be accomplished." No harm came of it, however, the idea did the State considerable service, and time wiped out racial distinction more effectively and thoroughly than the military authorities. The speech and actions of the Young Irelanders after their arrival in the United States, and their clear purpose to keep alive racial feeling, had not endeared them to the head of the diocese. He joined in the work of keeping the Irish regiments going, and during his absence in Europe Vicar-general Starr permitted the flags to be presented to the Irish Brigade in the Episcopal residence; but the archbishop kept a careful distance between himself and the military leaders.

James A. McMaster, the emphatic editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, got into trouble with the Government over his editorial utterances. An earnest defender of the Union he had at the same time very little confidence in the judgment and sincerity of the Republican administration in Washington. He denounced the South unsparingly and controverted the statements of the Bishop of Charleston with vigor; but upon President Lincoln he also turned his heavy guns, and found himself one morning a prisoner in Fort Lafayette and his paper suspended from publication for an indefinite period. No charges were made against him, he was released after a time, and at the end of a year permitted to issue his journal again. The *Metropolitan Record*, the

personal organ of the archbishop, edited by Mr. John Mullaly, also became a critic of the Government, and lost the favor of the prelate in consequence. His idea of patriotism in the war crisis embraced unquestioning loyalty to the party in control of the Government as the actual defenders of the Union. It was on this basis he gave his support to the President, and it was precisely on this ground that his critics condemned him. His attitude kept the mass of the people true to the one principle and the one method, in spite of the variations and distractions of the politicians, the hypercritics and the doctrinaires. Only the men at the wheel, men like Lincoln and Seward, knew the value of his great service in those dangerous, feverish, uncertain days, and took the greatest pains to show their deep and heartfelt appreciation. After his return from the European mission, Secretary Seward entertained him magnificently in Washington, and, because the day was Friday, made the banquet a fish dinner, "the most delicate compliment ever paid me in my life," said the delighted archbishop. Whatever his critics might think or say he had the satisfaction of knowing that his splendid attitude, his unselfish services, his patriotic utterances had not only helped the cause of the Union, but had redounded to the honor of his people. He could say with truth to a friend: "Both in the North and the South, our holy religion has risen, and is still rising, to the first rank in the estimation of the American people."

In the metropolis he alone had made the Church beautiful in the eyes of the nation, had discovered and brought forth its resources, had proved its divine strength before its bitterest enemies and to its astonished friends. In this revelation he had also revealed himself as one of the greatest men of his time, not wholly known to his own day, and long to remain unknown to the country he served so wonderfully, and the people whom he

fashioned to success. The writers of the national histories, large and small, have ignored him, as became their blindness; his own, used to a low condition, have never believed that Nazareth could send forth a great prophet. He died in January of 1864, too early to see the national glory; he saw it instead from the hills of heaven. His funeral took place in St. Patrick's cathedral on the seventh of January, the anniversary of his consecration twenty-six years before. During the two days that his body lay in state the whole city visited the cathedral to pay a tribute of respect to the great priest and the great citizen. At the funeral eight bishops and two hundred priests represented the various dioceses of the country; the City of New York was represented by its entire official board; the army by five generals and many officers; the professions by the most distinguished men of the time, of all creeds; the New York legislature passed resolutions of regret, and Mr. Douglass of Oneida County won fame by voting against them, with thirteen others, against seventy-six.

The President, Secretary Seward and Governor Seymour wrote words of praise and sympathy. Lincoln, through Seward, wrote: "His counsel and advice were gladly sought and continually received by the Government on those points which his position enabled him better than others to consider. At a conjuncture of deep interest to the country, the archbishop, associated with others, went abroad and did the nation a service there, with all the loyalty, fidelity and practical wisdom which, on so many occasions, illustrated his great ability for administration. I hope that the loss which the Church and the State have sustained in the removal of the head of your archdiocese, may, through the blessing of God, be repaired, so that what has been an unspeakable gain to him may not be a permanent cause of sorrow to them." Seward wrote of "the respect and affection which I have so long

cherished towards him as a faithful friend, a pious prelate, a loyal patriot and a great man." Governor Seymour wrote: "The progress of events and the growth of our country will not throw his memory into the shade, but they will develop and make more clear his influence upon the social condition of our people." Bishop McCloskey, in his panegyric of the dead prelate, summed up his character and his career in a single paragraph. "The genuine impulse and feelings of his heart were all impulses of kindness and pity. He knew no selfishness. He despised everything that was mean and little. He could never stoop to any low artifice or trickery in his dealings with men. He was unselfish and disinterested in everything that he undertook for the cause of the people, in every service he rendered either to religion or to his country. And we have this to say in conclusion, that if ever there was a man who, in the whole history and character of his life, impressed upon us the sense and conviction that he had been raised up by God, was chosen as His instrument to do an appointed work, and was strengthened by His grace and supported by His wisdom for the accomplishment of the work, that man was Archbishop Hughes."



St. Paul's, Harlem

Cardinal McCloskey
1864-1885



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

CHAPTER XVII

THE ADMINISTRATION OF CARDINAL McCLOSKEY



Rev. Augustine Thebaud

THE Holy See named John McCloskey, Bishop of Albany, the successor of Archbishop Hughes; the gentlest and happiest of men followed the extraordinary prelate, whose office of pioneer had been nobly filled in laying the foundations of a splendid diocese. Dr. McCloskey had been a favorite with the Archbishop, who had showered honors upon him and had given him his confidence. In temperament, he was the very contrary of his patron. Delicate in build, of a sound consti-

tution, yet without surplus vigor and energy, all his life he was forced to husband his physical resources, to avoid unusual strain, and to make up for heroic effort by the persistent and well-regulated labor of each day. His career was therefore indicated by his temperament and his physical condition. He was born in Brooklyn on March 10, of the year 1810, and went through the usual course of studies peculiar to his time. As a boy he attended the private school of Mrs. Charlotte Milmoth, a lady who had won distinction on the stage, and spent her last years in teaching. To her careful training he attributed the elegant pronunciation

of the vernacular, which marked his speech and his preaching. Mount St. Mary's in Maryland gave him his college training from 1821 to 1828, and also prepared him for the priesthood from 1829 to 1834. He was ordained in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Mulberry Street on Sunday, March 12, 1834, by Bishop Dubois, and was the first priest of native birth ordained in New York. The next three years were spent abroad, two studying in the city of Rome, and one travelling about the continent. He made the acquaintance of the most distinguished people of the time during this period, and evidently attracted them by his clever and refined character; for they remained his friends to the end of his career or their own. Bishop Dubois was rather fond of him, and made him his confidant in his troubles. He also entrusted to him many delicate commissions; and the letters of the young priest show with what fidelity he responded to the confidence of his superior.

On his return to New York, in 1837, he was made the pastor of St. Joseph's in Greenwich Village, succeeding the amiable and literary Father Pise, to whom the people were much attached. The more important pewholders, to show their disapproval of his appointment, withdrew from the church, and left the new pastor to preach to empty pews in the middle aisle. The simpler souls, more concerned with their salvation than with fighting the Bishop, remained, and were edified and delighted by the beautiful sermons and the charming character of the gentle and accomplished priest. He won his refractory pewholders in time, and they became his devoted friends. His disposition must have been most winning, since it overcame opposition as well as attracted the kindly. He became the friend of Bishop Hughes almost at the beginning of his career as coadjutor to Bishop Dubois. He was entrusted with the rectorship of Fordham College by Bishop Hughes, and while retaining his position as pastor of St. Joseph's

he directed its administration. He was only thirty-four years of age when Bishop Hughes made him his coadjutor, with the title of Bishop of Axiern, and three years later offered him an independent place in Albany as bishop of a new See. He accepted this labor and resigned his right to the See of New York as successor to Dr. Hughes. The diocese of Albany then embraced the greater part of the State of New York, as it took in the territory west to Rochester, and north to the St. Lawrence. Its Catholic population numbered about sixty thousand, with thirty-eight priests, forty-seven churches, and five schools. Before his administration ended in 1864 the Catholic population increased to 230,000. As in the metropolis, all things had to be done for the new diocese, and money was scarce. The temper concealed in the delicate frame of Bishop McCloskey showed itself by the manner in which he conducted the work of religion. He travelled about his wild diocese, administering the sacraments in halls, tanneries, and private houses, organizing his people, and laying strong foundations. He succeeded in building a handsome cathedral, in raising the number of the clergy to one hundred, the number of churches to one hundred and twenty, and of schools to twenty-seven, besides introducing religious communities into the diocese, and helping in the work of founding the Seminary at Troy.

His success as an administrator, his kindly manners, his devotedness, and his piety, no less than the fact that he was a native and diocesan of New York, all combined to suggest him as the fit successor to Archbishop Hughes. The gossip of the time spread the report that he revived his rights as former coadjutor of New York, and laid claim to the See as soon as Propaganda began to consider the names of the candidates. Of the three named by the bishops of the province he was placed first, or dig-

nissimus as it is called. Having a large acquaintance among the cardinals in Rome, and great influence in other quarters, report declared that he set all influences at work to secure the nomination. As a matter of fact he did what his refined nature permitted to destroy his own chances for the promotion. His delicate frame had unfitted him, he thought, for such a burden. His sensitive mind shrank naturally from the contrast into which Dr. Hughes' successor must inevitably come with that great and strenuous prelate. He wrote, therefore, to his friend, Cardinal Reisach, beseeching him to use his influence in his behalf against the appointment to New York. The letter makes interesting reading at this date. It was written from Albany on January 26, 1864, and placed in the hands of Archbishop Farley of New York, by the Prefect of Propaganda in 1902.

MOST EMINENT AND DEAR LORD CARDINAL: Your Eminence will pardon me, I trust, if, presuming on the kindness and condescension shown to me in the past, I now venture to have recourse to you in a moment which for me is one of deepest anxiety. Your Eminence, as a member of the Sacred Congregation De Propaganda Fide, will have learned most probably before this reaches you, that among the names commended through the Sacred Congregation to the Holy See to fill the vacancy caused by the much lamented death of the illustrious Archbishop of New York, my name, unfortunately, is placed first on the list. Now I write to implore Your Eminence, in case there should be any danger of my appointment, or of my being transferred from Albany to New York, to aid me in preventing it, and to save me from the humiliation and misery of being placed in a position for the duties and responsibilities of which I feel myself both physically and morally unfit and unequal. If you will bear with me I will state a few of my many, very many, grounds of objection. In the

first place it was only by a majority of one vote my name came to be placed first. My own vote was and still is in favor of the Bishop of Buffalo. Again, when after having been appointed and consecrated coadjutor of the Bishop of New York, with the right of succession, I resigned both coadjutorship and right of succession, I then resolved, and still hold to the resolution, that as far as it depended on my free will, I should never again return to New York. Having been relieved from the prospect of succession, I never thought of afterwards aspiring or being called to it. I have accordingly done nothing to prepare or qualify myself for it. I speak only from the deepest sincerity of heart, and from the strongest conviction of conscience, when I say that I possess neither the learning, nor prudence, nor energy, nor firmness, nor bodily health and strength which are requisite for such an arduous and highly responsible office as that of Archbishop of New York. I recoil from the very thought of it with shuddering, and I do most humbly trust that such a crushing load will not be placed upon my weak and unworthy shoulders. Either the Bishop of Louisville, Dr. Spalding, or the Bishop of Buffalo, Dr. Timon, would fill the post with dignity, efficiency, and honor. Your Eminence may perhaps be disposed to ask why not make these representations to Cardinal Barnabo rather than to you? My answer is: I do not wish to seem as taking it for granted that my name will be presented to the Holy See. The communications which will be received from the several archbishops of the country, and from other sources, may change entirely the aspect of the case, and no serious attention may be paid to the simple fact of my name appearing first on the list forwarded from New York. In such an event, objections and remonstrances on my part made to the Cardinal Prefect would not only seem out of place, but would seem somewhat presumptuous and premature. It will be

for Your Eminence to make such use of my communication as to your own wisdom and prudence seems best. I only wish, if occasion requires it, my feelings and sentiments shall be made known to the Cardinal Prefect and Sacred Congregation. When once the decision is made, when the Holy Father speaks, there remains for me nothing but silence. His will is in all things to me a law. Begging a thousand pardons for this intrusion, and commending myself once more to your friendly interest and sympathy, I have the honor to be

YOUR EMINENCE'S MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT IN CHRIST.

This letter affords a large view of the prelate's character. Delicate health had somewhat destroyed his confidence in his own powers. He had become accustomed to the routine and responsibilities of the diocese of Albany, and the mere thought of facing a new routine and a heavier and growing burden depressed him. His keen, clear mind foresaw the growth of the metropolis, and the need for careful and efficient administration. A sensitive conscience warned him that he might not be able to provide such an administration. Nevertheless, the Pope named him Archbishop of New York on the sixth of May, 1864. Immediately he closed his affairs in Albany and took possession of the metropolitan See. His welcome was cordial and impressive. The times had changed wonderfully in ten years. The Civil War was coming to an end under the sledge-hammer process of General Grant. The masterful career of Archbishop Hughes had welded into one harmonious body the scattered elements of power in the Catholic masses. Opposition had died out, a definite policy had become a custom, prestige had increased, and time had more than justified the methods of Dr. Hughes. His successor, therefore, received a hearty welcome. The clergy and

laity greeted him in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Mulberry Street, in which he had been ordained. Vicar-General Starrs read the address. At a later date Charles O'Connor, son of the editor of the *Shamrock*, and foremost lawyer of the American bar, gave a banquet in his honor at Delmonico's, where two hundred distinguished citizens of New York sat down, anxious to do honor to the successor of the greatest churchman of his time. They were men of all creeds. Their presence was a testimony to the new spirit abroad. The Catholic Church was recognized as a power for good in the State. It was a real triumph over the prejudice fostered by false history for three hundred years.

Dr. McCloskey began his career, therefore, under the happiest auspices. He used to say of himself that it was his good fortune to reap what others had sown; a very true saying, and illustrative of the good man's humility. He might have added that his own sowing was not to be despised, and that his reaping of the Hughes' harvest could hardly have been improved upon, under the circumstances. He took up the work promptly and carried it on as close to the old policy as possible. If Hughes was daring and original, McCloskey was firm and conservative. He never sought a particular situation, never urged on a crisis; neither did he avoid them, and he had the tact and power to say the right word and do the right thing at the critical moment. The chief work of a bishop is the sanctification of his people, which is brought about mainly through the work of the clergy. The personal relation of the bishop to the priest is the element which determines finally the strength and the success of his achievement. This truth is not always recognized by the two parties, with a result regularly disastrous to bishop, clergy, and people. It was the proud boast of Dr. McCloskey that he knew every priest in his diocese outside the convent priests. His dealings with them were characterized

by that gentleness, candor, sympathy, and courtesy which were prominent in his social life. He left them, in their administration of the parishes, pretty much to themselves during the first part of his career; and later, as his strength declined, he withdrew somewhat from active intimacy with them, leaving the general administration, outside of important affairs, to his vicars-general.

At the beginning of his work his council consisted of the men whom he had found in office: the old vicar-general under Dr. Hughes, Father William Starrs, Archdeacon McCarron of St. Mary's, and Dr. Cummings of St. Stephen's. To these he added Rev. William Quinn of St. Peter's; his chancellor was Father Thomas Preston, and his secretary, Father Francis McNierney. A few years later, accepting the changes of death and removal, he made up his official household on a new plan, and did not find change in it necessary for the rest of his administration. Rev. John Farley succeeded as secretary, Father McNierney having become Bishop of Albany; Fathers Starrs and Quinn were the vicars-general; and the council was made up of Father Preston, Father Farley, the Jesuit Father Bapst, the Redemptorist Father Wirth, the Paulist Father Hecker, and Father Annet Lafont, of the Society of Mercy. The body was rather representative, inasmuch as the convent priests had representation as large as the diocesans. The members were men of character, truly eminent, and of various temperaments, from the stern, abrupt Quinn, the unbending Preston, through all shades of human temper, down to the most youthful, the polished and mild-mannered secretary. It was quite certain that with such a council the Archbishop would hear all sides of every question without leaving the council-hall; and it was quite as certain that these acute and industrious men would keep him acquainted with all good movements, and would urge the inception of others still untried. Dr. McCloskey

remained surrounded by these advisers until his death, a fact which had much to do with the remarkable success of his administration. He had a deep and tender affection for his people, and his behavior towards the laity, on public occasions and in private life, won for him the most enthusiastic support. His speeches and sermons to them spoke the tenderness of his heart, and at the same time delighted them by clear thought, beautiful language, and elegant utterance. His delightful personality informed the official life of the diocese, and so stimulated general activity that the period from 1865 to 1885 reads like romance in the journals of the time.

The clergy built churches everywhere, many of them real achievements in architecture; the church schools began to multiply and to improve in character; the charities took a long step forward; the teaching and charitable communities increased in number; the organization of lay societies flourished; Catholics became prominent in social, professional, and business life; the Catholic press in all its forms showed a vitality and reached a public, which neither before nor since has it enjoyed; and the progress of the entire Catholic body was made without public clamor, without unnecessary friction, so smooth, so quiet, so effective were the methods of the Archbishop and his officials. The details of that progress may be read at length in the following chapters. It is enough here to give the figures, which may be compared with those given at the close of Chapter XVI, in the life of Dr. Hughes. The Catholic population had increased by 1885 to 600,000; they were served by 285 diocesan priests and 119 convent priests; their schools and charities were managed by 300 brothers and 2,000 nuns; the churches numbered 176, the chapels 60, and mass was given at 38 missions which had no churches; eight orphanages sheltered 2,000 children, and thirteen

industrial schools trained 5,000 poor children; three homes for the aged supported 700 inmates, six hospitals were in operation, and 43 conferences of St. Vincent de Paul with 1,000 members looked after the scattered destitute. And behind these figures stood a unity of feeling and action that bespoke the perfect health of the whole body; the administration moved without a hitch; and every day the Church itself came into greater prominence through events of various kinds, most of them connected with the quiet, silent Archbishop himself.

The first of these was his elevation to the dignity of cardinal. It became through circumstances an international event. Pius IX had been urged by President Lincoln to confer this honor on Archbishop Hughes, but had been turned from the intention by various and conflicting opinions of the American bishops. Dr. McCloskey had no enemies and few critics, and no obstacle stood between the honor of the purple and the See of New York; not even the wail of the cautious that such an event would fan the flames of bigotry. Therefore, on March 15, of the year 1875, Pope Pius IX named John McCloskey cardinal, with the titular church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome. Archbishop Manning of London received the honor at the same time. An event of ordinary importance in continental countries became, by its rarity in English-speaking lands, a tremendous incident. The American press was just then developing its extraordinary talents for gathering news, along with other talents not so admirable. It exhausted its highest powers in describing the advent of the Red Hat among Americans. Public curiosity was excited to the highest pitch, and was fed with all the details connected with the event, from the sailing of the Ablegate Monsignor Cæsare Roncetti from Rome with the official notification, to the return of the same official some months later. The Catholic body was filled

with joy at the distinction conferred upon the much loved and highly respected Archbishop. Monsignor Roncetti arrived in New York on Tuesday, April 6, and was met down the bay by a committee of the St. Michael's Association, a society formed for the purpose of aiding the volunteers who had joined the papal army before the Italian occupation of Rome. The gentlemen of the committee were John D. Keiley, Jr., Patrick Farrelly, John McAnerney, and Harold Henwood. Their reception steamer which took off the Ablegate and his party from the liner carried the papal colors as well as the American flag, and much was Monsignor Roncetti astonished to learn that no one had to ask permission of government to fly this standard. Accompanying him were his secretary, Professor Ubaldi of the Propaganda, and Count Alessandro Marefoschi of the Swiss Guard. Arrived at the dock, the party rode to the Cardinal's residence in three carriages. A number of friends had gathered to greet the delegation, and to compliment His Eminence on his honors. Among them was Charles O'Connor, ever the admiring friend of Dr. McCloskey.

The ceremonies began the next day, Wednesday, with the presentation of the Zuchetto Rosa, the red skull-cap of a cardinal. It was a private affair, but carried out with precise and ancient ceremonies. The Cardinal and his suite assembled in the parlor of the residence during the morning hours. Count Marefoschi entered in military fashion, saluted His Eminence, and presented to him a small box, out of which Father Farley drew the cap and a letter from Cardinal Antonelli. The Count made a speech in Latin, to which His Eminence replied in the same tongue. Dr. Edward McGlynn read the letter of Cardinal Antonelli. The officer of the Swiss Guard then took his station at the door, and Monsignor Roncetti entered and delivered a speech of congratulation in French, to which His Eminence replied in the same

tongue, and the ceremony was over. On the following Saturday a number of friends presented the Cardinal with carriage and horses suited to his new dignity. The carriage, its decorations, and the harness of the horses were decorated in the Roman style, and created a sensation on Madison Avenue the day of the presentation. A committee consisting of Judge Gunning Bedford, John and William O'Brien, Thomas Murphy, José F. Navarro, Paul V. Thebaud, James Lynch, George Hecker, James B. Nicholson, and Thomas Addis Emmett presented the gift at the residence of the Cardinal. Among the subscribers to it were Mrs. Adrian Iselin, Jeremiah Dewelin, Eugene Kelly, Bryan Lawrence, Hugh Hastings, Louis Binsse, and Dennis Sadlier. The Cardinal accepted the gift in his happiest manner, and stood at the window watching its glory as the coachman drove up and down the street. He used it for a time, and quietly disposed of it afterwards. Its splendor suited the streets of an old-world city admirably, but in New York exposed its owner to ridicule. One of the journals grew quite rabid over the incident, and made it the occasion of wild editorials on the introduction of monarchy into the Republic.

The conferring of the Biretta Rosa, the main ceremony connected with the visit of Monsignor Roncetti, took place in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Mulberry Street, on Tuesday, April 27. Many imposing ceremonies had occurred in the old church since Bishop Cheverus dedicated it in 1815, but this event was its crowning glory. The day was exceptionally fine. Among the guests in the body of the church were Mayor Wickham, Collector Chester Arthur, August Belmont, Thurlow Weed, Rev. O. B. Frothingham, Sinclair Tousey, John Kelly, Francis Kernan, Judge Charles P. Daly, Charles O'Connor, and a host of others. Seven archbishops and twenty bishops entered the sanctuary, and took off their mitres as the Cardinal entered in his splendid robes. He

occupied his usual throne. Archbishop Bayley occupied another opposite. Bishop Loughlin, of Brooklyn, celebrant of the Mass, sat near the altar. The Ablegate sat near the Cardinal, and the Count Marefoschi stood near the throne in military fashion. Fathers Quinn, Preston, and Donnelly were the priests at the throne; Father Edward McGlynn was the assistant priest; Revs. Patrick McSweeney and James McGean were the deacon and sub-deacon of the Mass; Father Farley, the Secretary, and Father John Kearney were the masters of ceremonies. Three hundred priests were present from all parts of the land. The Red Biretta lay on a stand near the gospel side of the altar, covered with a golden veil. After the Mass had been sung Dr. Edward McGlynn read the papal decree which conferred upon Dr. McCloskey the honor of the cardinalate; then Monsignor Roncetti pronounced in Latin a graceful eulogy on the Cardinal and his country; Archbishop Bayley delivered his address of felicitation also in Latin; the Cardinal then left his throne and at the altar received the Red Biretta from Archbishop Bayley; he replied to the addresses in Latin briefly, and then addressed the people in the vernacular. The ceremony closed with the *Te Deum*. As the procession marched out, the officer of the Swiss Guard walked behind the Cardinal, and in his splendid uniform, booted and spurred, his sword at his side, his golden helmet shining like a sun, Count Marefoschi caught the general eye and the popular fancy. The same evening, after the long banquet of the afternoon, at which speeches were made without number, the bishops assembled in the residence, and one after another Bishop McQuaid of Rochester, Bishop Conroy of Albany, and Bishop Ryan of Buffalo, delivered addresses of congratulation, full of affection and esteem. In fact there was no end to the addresses for the next three months. A jubilation began which did not really end for a whole year.

The Cardinal became the best known man in the country through the devotion of the press; and while the publicity and its consequences wearied him, the Catholic body found in it immense consolation, after the disagreeable incidents attending the seizure of Rome by the Italian King a few years before. It was thought then by the public that the Church had come to an end, and the public said as much to the irritated and disgusted Catholics. The great interest in the ceremony of conferring the cardinalitial dignity, the lively attention given to the progress of the Church in the United States, the character of the prelates, priests, and laity gathered from all parts to witness the ceremony, hinted broadly that the Church was not yet dead.

The solemn dedication of the new cathedral four years later gave a new emphasis to Catholic vitality, and its independence of accidents like the seizure of Rome. The work on this grand temple had been abruptly stopped by the calamity of the Civil War. Dr. McCloskey resumed it at the earliest moment, and by steady effort succeeded in getting it ready for public use May 25, 1879. It was the Sunday within the octave of the Ascension, a lovely day, its beauty of the spring very significant of the occasion; for Catholicity in America celebrated in the dedication of this church the glorious close of its spring season. It had fallen to the lot of the Catholic body to build the most magnificent temple on the continent, a dignified Gothic structure resembling in its broadest outline the famous cathedral at Cologne; built of granite foundations and marble superstructure; illumined by brilliant windows, and spacious enough to give it rank with the great temples of the modern world. Cardinal McCloskey presided at the dedication, sang the Mass in presence of forty-five archbishops and bishops, and numerous clergy, and an immense congregation; the masters of ceremonies were Father John Kearney, Father

John Farley, and Father Charles McDonell; the priests at the throne were Father Quinn and Father Preston, vicars-general, and Father Arthur Donnelly; the deacons of the Mass were Fathers Edward McGlynn and James McGean; the Paulist Fathers, Young and Brown, led the sanctuary choir; and Bishop Ryan, coadjutor of St. Louis and famous orator, preached the sermon. The splendor of the scene far surpassed the ceremony at St. Patrick's in Mulberry Street four years previous, as the new church surpassed the old. In fact, this sudden blossoming of the old Church in the new Republic, whose free air, it was thought, would simply stifle her, stunned the observant; the great temple, the splendid rites, the dignified clergy, the reverent multitude, the glorious music, the powerful preacher, all spoke of everlasting power; and at least it meant the renewal of that force which many thought on the way to sure and final extinction.

In the evening, Archbishop Gibbons, successor to the lamented Bayley, presided at Vespers, and Bishop Keane of Richmond preached the sermon. Between the two services the public banquet was held, and among the guests were Charles O'Connor, Eugene Kelly, John E. Develin, and John Renwick, the architect of the cathedral; all of whom made speeches of felicitation on the approaching completion of the great work. It was really the crowning event of the Cardinal's life. The Red Hat had come to him unsought and scarcely thought of; the dedication of the great cathedral had come to pass through his determination and his labors. He had been in Rome the year previous and had received from the new Pope, Leo XIII, the last details of his honors, and had taken formal possession of his titular church for the first time, Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. Though he went through the trying scenes of greatness comfortably, his years were beginning to weigh upon him, and in 1880 he asked for a coad-

jutor. The Holy See appointed Michael Augustine Corrigan, Bishop of Newark, his coadjutor with the right of succession and the title of Archbishop of Petra. The new prelate took up his residence with the Cardinal, in the new building back of the cathedral on Madison Avenue, and lived quietly until his accession to the See, five years afterward.

The summing up of the Cardinal's career, however, may be said to have taken place with the holding of the Fourth Provincial Council in 1883, when he assembled the bishops of New York and New Jersey and formulated the laws which were to govern the ecclesiastical province, now reduced in size by the withdrawal of New England into the province of Boston. The bishops of Albany, Brooklyn, Newark, Buffalo, Ogdensburg, Rochester, Trenton, and Curium attended, and united in a pastoral letter to their respective flocks, whose separate articles fairly represent the aims and ideas which had dominated the life of the Cardinal. The letter began by thanking God for the wonderful growth of the Church in America, and the people for their generous aid in maintaining the works of religion; the disappearance of the old prejudices against Catholics was a source of joy to all; the Republic deserved praise and congratulation for the freedom which it secured to all its citizens; nevertheless, the increase of infidelity had become so marked, and its errors were so openly advocated, that the Fathers of the Council found it necessary to warn the people of their danger, and to advise the best methods to ward off threatening consequences. On the subject of marriage the people were reminded that no power on earth can dissolve the bond, and were urged to marry only with Catholics, to prepare thoughtfully for the sacrament, and after receiving the sacraments to be married with a Nuptial Mass. In the work of Christian education, they were warned that the Church cannot accept

a training for the children which deliberately excludes religion, and they were strongly urged to build schools of the proper character, and to take a careful and conscientious part in the education of the children. They were warned against the dangers of a licentious press, and instructed in the usefulness of a religious and God-fearing press, being recommended to support Catholic journals and magazines, and to establish libraries. The nature of secret societies was explained at length, and connection with them forbidden. The temperance movement was highly commended, also the common parochial organizations of piety and charity; extravagance in funerals, and such excesses as Sunday picnics and moonlight excursions for charity, were condemned. Congregational singing was urged upon the people. The whole document breathed a spirit of authority and dignity and sweetness. Its protest against the increasing indifference to religion and against a sneering materialism startled Christian society. Its defence of the ancient and revered doctrines, at a moment when denunciation of them had become common, reminded the anti-Christian party that faith in Christ was not an outworn institution, but had still its able defenders and millions of believers.

In all these great events which won the close attention and study of the American public, the cardinalate, the dedication, and the council, as well as in the ordinary affairs of his life, Cardinal McCloskey bore himself with a dignity, and expressed himself with a power, that proved his superior temperament. He was modest in his highest fortune, and sincerely attributed his success to the noble foundations of his predecessor. Once when congratulated in a public function he replied in this fashion:

“As to all that you have said with regard to the promotions that have followed one another, I can only say that not one of them was ever sought by me. Whatever of success may have

attended my efforts, must be attributed to the good will, zeal, and generous coöperation of the clergy and laity, for by them have churches, convents, hospitals, and various charitable institutions increased in numbers beyond my most sanguine hopes."

This was quite true, but without the sweet, firm, large temper of the Cardinal, his generous mind and careful administration, the work would not have been accomplished with such efficiency and variety, nor the events of splendor have happened. His was a rarely fine personality; and if he reaped where others had sown, none grudged him his honors, which he wore nobly to the great honor and utility of the Church and the people.



St. Francis Xavier

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHARACTER AND OPINIONS OF THE CLERGY



J. R. G. Hassard

THE clergy who, during the administration of Cardinal McCloskey, carried on the work of sanctification were men for the most part of European birth. Archbishop Hughes gathered his priests from the four quarters of the earth, through friendly agents in Europe, and succeeded admirably where Bishop Dubois had failed. Before his death he had succeeded in founding the new seminary at Troy, which was to train for him a native clergy, and to

cast in the same mould young Europeans who offered their services to the diocese. The priests in the year 1865 were for the most part of Irish birth among the diocesan clergy; in the Redemptorist and other communities they were either German or French with a sprinkling of Italians; the Paulist community was then composed entirely of convert Americans; and the faculty of the Troy Seminary were Belgians. In character and training, these priests represented precisely the conditions of their native land. A good number had received their education in American or Canadian colleges and seminaries, and had absorbed in a measure the spirit of the country; but in essence, and very often in accidents, they kept the mould in which they were born. Each lived after the old country fashion, and kept well to the ancient traditions; they judged the life around them by the European

standard and measure; and they kept apart from one another, like the currents of the ocean, alike in their nature and their calling, yet moving in contrary directions. With the advent of the Troy Seminary and the Roman training, there came a marked change. The young clerics, whatever their nationality, came under the strong influence of the same training. After some years in Troy or elsewhere, a few were sent to the American College in Rome. At ordination the racial differences were not so marked, the students had become comrades, and native and foreigner were impelled by the same spirit. Before the close of the Cardinal's life the complexion of the clergy had almost completely changed. This was true even of the religious communities, which had developed native vocations; the Paulists were no longer only convert Americans; the Jesuits had lost their French and Italian superiors; there was still going on among the Redemptorists and Franciscans the inevitable struggle between the American-trained and the Europeans.

The more modern product of Troy, Rome, and European universities enjoyed a large influence, but was itself influenced by the conditions prevailing in the diocese. The younger priests had the native dash, and many of them brought degrees from abroad, degrees which were then highly esteemed. They had the benefit of travel and foreign experience. Naturally they introduced the latest opinions, took up the newest methods, and favored all things American. But they were the young men, in the lesser positions, and intrenched custom resisted them, kept them and their methods as long as possible in the background, and yielded only with time to superior numbers. As a whole, the clergy during this period were clever, rather than learned, for leisure was not yet born for the American priesthood. They were better at the business of building than at letters. Very few

had the English habit of writing, or the French love of fine reading. They were more practical than cultivated, good talkers but not fine preachers and orators, although eloquence had in that day great vogue. They were not as characteristic as the clergy of the Hughes period, because the whole body was being shaped into family likeness by gentle degrees. Simplicity was the mark of their manners. They enjoyed a lively social life, gathering in numbers on festival occasions, and lived together with much geniality, as neighbors, or as associates, for pastor and assistants occupied the same house. They were influential with their own people, and had come to be respected by the Protestants, although with these they had very little association. The Protestants referred to all priests as Irish or Dutch, and to all Catholics as Irish, and kept away from them. The clergy, as in Europe, never went outside of the fold except when invited. There was a delicacy of feeling in the matter, the desire not to intrude where their presence was usually resented. This delicacy was carried so far that the non-Catholics, that is, people of no faith, who would have been pleased to receive their preaching and ministration rarely encountered them. The general reputation of the clergy for respectability, industry, and virtue was very high, and their devoted lives in private merited the popular esteem and much more. Their public appearances, as preachers, orators, and the like, on great occasions, their share in the civic life, their excellent carrying out of the ritual, and their devotion to the confessional, to the poor, to the young, and to the sick and dying, were the admiration of the close observers.

The inevitable divisions came with the friction incident to corporate life. Theology has its liberal and conservative schools, as have method and expediency. There was no lack of material in so lively a community as New York for building up opposing

parties; there were the national and local differences in politics, the race question, the school question, the question of policy, the question of administration. The first division took place on the liberal and conservative lines, which must have been intensified by racial feeling. As a rule, the European priest was thoroughly conservative, and as a rule the native was liberal, both in his theology and his method. The native was usually strongly supported by his fellow-student of foreign birth. The differences between these two parties never took on the bitterness peculiar to Europe, for several reasons; but chiefly because the American temperament was opposed to fiery opposition on debatable questions, and was forever seeking the compromise; and again because the element of faction was lacking, faction which always represents the personal interest of the ambitious. Liberals and conservatives argued and disagreed amicably, and thought no less of one another. There were no radicals, except among the laity, and even they had been discredited and overthrown by the vigorous arm of Archbishop Hughes. The first point of difference arose upon the race question, ever a source of danger. The extremists were loud as always; the Irish should remain Irish, the Germans should remain Germans to the twentieth generation; the native complained that the Church was delayed in her progress by slavish devotion to race, would have the English language spoken everywhere, protested against importation of European priests, and encouraged native vocations. As usual, nature in time quietly wiped them all out, with the aid of prudent rulers, leaving the native priest, the vernacular, and the modern method properly triumphant. The school question struck more keenly, if not so deeply, into the feelings of the clergy. The tendency of the Catholic body had been to build church schools from the very beginning, a very natural tendency; and this tendency had

been developed by the unfair treatment to which Catholic children had been subjected by imprudent teachers and officials in the public schools. In time the public schools became kinder, and finally banished all discrimination against foreigner and Catholic, Jew and Gentile. It was then too late to win back the clergy to support of the common school. Atheism and materialism all over the world had begun to seize upon the school as the best means of propagating their errors, and with the instinct of its nature the Church had taken up the work of building its own schools.

The clergy divided on the question into three parties. Some opposed the church school and favored the public school, on the ground that the latter helped powerfully to Americanize our mixed populations, while the other retarded that most necessary consummation by founding schools of varying nationalities. Some upheld the church school as the only means of keeping the children in the faith, among a people either indifferent to religion, or hostile to Catholicity. Others sided with neither view, but maintained the futility of the whole business, theoretically and practically, since the expense of a school system made it an impossibility. Then came the party of compromise, who planned to secure financial help from the State for the church school; these agreed to dispense with various things in order to get State support, and thereby to build up a school system, acceptable to all parties, and made possible by aid from the Government. The controversy never rose to proportions. There was occasional bitterness, both racial and partisan. The Catholics speaking other tongues than English rather favored the church school, as the public school would not recognize any other language than the vernacular. The discussion arising from opposing opinions gave the whole question a thorough airing, and helped the growth

of a Catholic school system by acquainting all with the merits of religious training for the young.

Some division also arose on the propriety and necessity of preaching the gospel to the non-Catholic world. The Catholic body had been busy for a century in securing a bare existence, and paid little attention to the sects and the infidel. Not a few looked with suspicion upon our eminent converts, particularly such as, like McMaster, Brownson, and Hecker, could write and speak with power, and see the need of new methods for new times and modern men. Kindness to converts, and to polite and sincere inquirers, was always a Catholic quality, but no one went out of his way to seek the lost sheep of the fold. The priests who at first cultivated friendly relations with Protestants were looked upon with suspicion and scorn. "I never liked these Protestant priests," said Archbishop Hughes to Father Sylvester Malone, when that notable praised the pastor of St. Columba's for his intimacy with non-Catholics. The great Hughes had his own suspicion of converts, particularly after his unfortunate experience with Dr. Forbes. He was kind to them, but not more than affable. The converts in the priesthood advocated earnestly a direct mission to the outsiders. The Paulist community made this work part of their program, and were ridiculed for their rashness. Nevertheless the idea had many advocates, and continued to be discussed until its practical solution arrived. These three matters, the race question, the school question, and the Gentile question, were closely related. The extremist on the first, if an Irishman or a German, would favor the church school and condemn preaching to the Gentiles; if an American, he would dismiss the church school, and favor an approach to non-Catholics. The event could even then be clearly foreseen, that when all became Americans, alive to the conditions, racial distinctions

would be abolished, the school maintained, and the gospel preached with energy to whosoever would listen.

There were minor matters upon which considerable difference arose, with regard to the use of alcoholic drinks, the business of selling the same, the frequenting of the theatres, and the observance of the Sunday. For a long time the advocates of total abstinence made the continuance of the Church dependent upon their hobby; attendance at a play had the disgrace of a mortal sin; the observance of the Sunday threatened in places to become as strict as the ancient Pharisaic Sabbath. All these matters, however, righted themselves with time. The question of the clergy's share in political affairs was settled by popular opinion, just how, it would be impossible to say; but the tradition arose and took firm root that the priests were not to mingle in such matters, unless the Church was attacked, or the Catholics because of their faith. Priests and people were then all Democrats, and it would have been easy to establish the opposite tradition. As the clergy increased in numbers, the question arose of their taking a more immediate share in the government of the Church. The bishop was, in this missionary country, far from the central jurisdiction, legislator, judge, and executive, in a word, absolute dictator. It was speedily questioned whether this unlimited authority should be permitted to remain in the hands of one man. In New York the question could not be considered practical, since the Cardinal ruled with sense and moderation; but there were not wanting incidents in other dioceses to prove how poorly man is fitted to exercise absolute authority. Moreover, the American theory of government and the actual conditions were such as to impel the clergy to take active part in the church government; and in the course of time, as we shall see in another chapter, the church authorities were compelled to adopt measures which gave the

clergy some share in church government. There was nothing acute in these problems, partly because the clergy were too busy with the work of building and maintaining parishes, and chiefly because the Cardinal would not permit any condition to become acute, a discussion to be carried beyond limits, or an agitator to talk too wildly. His winning manners and his clear determination secured peace in his domain. Archbishop Hughes frightened opposition off the field; the Cardinal never seemed to have any opponents. The men who at various times and in many ways represented the little conflicts of thought in the diocese were not of inferior stuff, although with few exceptions they had not university training and were possessed of only moderate culture.

Rev. William Starrs, vicar-general in two administrations, was an Irishman of mediocre ability, who attained his position rather by his industry and kindly disposition than by remarkable qualities. His associate, Rev. William Quinn, who became senior vicar-general at his death, and held the position during the Cardinal's life, was a man of genuine ability as an administrator and financier, and at the same time the most positive character of his day. He began his career under Dr. Hughes as a student at Fordham, and so speedily proved his ability that the Archbishop sent him on a collecting tour for the college, and in 1849, on the death of Father Power, placed him in charge of St. Peter's in Barclay Street, to settle its bitter financial problem. His success there made him dear to Dr. Hughes, and secured for him a perpetual place in the diocesan council. He ruled with energy, caring little for popular opinion or personal feelings, aroused much opposition by his methods, but never turned to the right or left for any obstacle but the interference of the Cardinal, whose plans and wishes he carried out with fidelity and skill. He was actually named coadjutor to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, for

the purpose of correcting its financial tangle, but the Cardinal persuaded him to remain in New York. He was an absolutist in church government, and a striking contrast in this respect to his superior. For the conventions he had not the slightest regard, and walked his own path through custom and etiquette with perfect unconsciousness of their demands. Rev. Thomas Preston was his associate, a convert to the faith, and a superior character; somewhat of a Puritan, as rigid in his life as Father Quinn was absolute in his rule; a fine speaker and a respectable writer, with some volumes to his credit; he had a fine presence, but a chilly manner; he was a devoted pastor, and founded a community of nuns; and from his entrance into the faith until his death, upheld a high standard of life and thought. He was as thoroughly a Puritan as Father Quinn was an Irishman; and both vicars-general on the intellectual side inclined to extreme conservatism. There was in both an element of narrowness, all the stranger that the Irishman had financial largeness and the American had come out of Episcopal confusion. They were made prelates by the Cardinal, and died, Mgr. Quinn in Europe in 1886, and Mgr. Preston in 1892.

Rev. Michael O'Farrell, the pastor of St. Peter's in Barclay Street, who afterwards became the first Bishop of Trenton, enjoyed a reputation for wit and bibliomania, for oratorical power and social charm. He had been a member of the Sulpician community, from which he withdrew to enter the diocese of New York, where he became the preacher and orator for notable occasions, stored up a magnificent library, and helped to bring about that smoothness of clerical social life which was later to become the normal condition. His oratory was marked by elegance of diction, deep sentiment and fine arrangement, rather than by force, and his writings had the same character, being very rich in

allusion and quotation, as became a great reader of books. Rev. William H. Clowry, the pastor of St. Gabriel's, had the reputation of sanctity, of devotion to the people, and of personal benignity, which are so prominent in some priests over others. He built up the parish of St. Gabriel's by beautiful self-sacrifice, and earned a tremendous influence over his people. In the famous Draft Riots of 1863 he distinguished himself by his courage in rescuing one unfortunate who had been shot down by the mob, and carrying him on a wheelbarrow to the nearest hospital, although surrounded by the rioters; and later he exerted himself to save the foolish and enraged people, who had been led away by frenzy, from the legal consequences of their misbehavior. (Rev. Richard Brennan of St. Rose's parish, a dark-featured and rather handsome man, won celebrity for his sarcastic wit, and the useful books which his leisure occasionally produced. Rev. John Larkin, the pastor of Holy Innocents' parish, besides being an administrator of high rank, united in himself a wit of the keenest and a strength of purpose that often produced consequences. He attended Dion Boucicault's play of *The Shaughraun* at the Park Theatre one Saturday evening, to satisfy himself that its wake scene was as objectionable and as slanderous of Irish character as report made it; and the next day on the altar he gave it a severe and well-deserved criticism. At the time the English were celebrating the jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, he announced a solemn requiem Mass for the anniversary of her coronation, in behalf of the millions of Irish done to death by English misgovernment. The ceremony was telegraphed around the world, and the incident became celebrated. He was the first to use the electric light for church illumination at a time when the authorities hesitated, expecting a rebuke and prohibition from the Congregation of Rites for the innovation.

Rev. William Everett, pastor of the Nativity parish, lived his own life on the East Side, very much as he had lived it from his youth, punctual, industrious, devoted, indifferent to the rush of events and the passing of time, careless of the crowd, and tenacious, but not obstinate in his own opinion. He had been the first of the converts, outlived them all, and went his own way without expressing particular interest in public events. His life was consistent and holy, but to strangers looked unduly severe, though his intimates found him a charming man, with the unusual fault of doing the same things each day at the same hour. Rev. Arthur Donnelly on the West Side of the city, in charge of St. Michael's parish, which he organized, like Father Everett had been in business, and conducted his parish work in commercial fashion; hours for everything, books in skilled hands, accounts perfectly kept, system everywhere. He succeeded in everything but the management of St. Stephen's in a time of distress, and rose to high honors. Rev. Anthony Schwenniger of Assumption parish was a German of prominence, who endeared himself to his own people and to the clergy by the generosity of his temper and his practical and profound interest in the work and the questions of the time. He received his training entirely in his native country, Prussia, and kept in touch with the great Catholic movement in Germany under Windthorst and other leaders; and by his interest and his information did much to make the work of the great Center party well known and popular in this country.

The best known priest of the time was undoubtedly Dr. Edward McGlynn, the pastor of St. Stephen's, whose career had opened with something like brilliancy almost as soon as he arrived home from his studies in Rome. A tall and powerful man, fluent in speech and confident of himself, fearless in word and act, kindly of heart and imperious of manner, well instructed but

not logical, he won a high position in the diocese by his early appointment to St. Stephen's, and a strong place in many hearts by his generous disposition. The noted Dr. Cummings had made the church of St. Stephen's popular, as the Cathedral afterwards became, a place of resort for Catholic visitors to the city, where the services were dignified and beautiful, the music attractive, and the ushers polite and attentive. Dr. McGlynn was the orator by nature, blest with a sonorous and beautiful voice, ready to speak at a moment's notice before any audience, and really tireless. His greatest fault, which was scarcely a fault thirty years ago, was talking too long; his greatest virtue that he spoke regularly on the great questions of the hour. He was in demand all over the country, and his physical strength enabled him to meet the demand. He had opinions on all subjects and expressed them openly; he favored the public school; he would have all things American as soon as possible; he advocated the repression of Europeanism in this country, the removal of all dead wood, the speedy introduction of canon law. He became a power at an early date. His utterances on the school question, and his opinions on other matters, brought him severe criticism, but the constant and boundless charity in which he indulged disarmed critics and won their regard.

Another popular priest, though in altogether a different way, was Rev. Isaac Hecker, the founder of the Paulist community; one of the men born to go his own way through life; a tall, pale, wiry man, with most expressive eyes; not an orator, but a very interesting speaker, full of earnestness and pathos. He had but one idea, the conversion of the American people. He discussed all his life the best means to reach the non-Catholic multitude. His books were written with that end in view, and his life spent itself in the endeavor to accomplish that mighty aim. Welcome

everywhere, he went far and wide on his mission. He was in a way inexplicable to his own time, but our day understands him better. Cardinal McCloskey esteemed him, and a large section of the clergy idolized him. He was looked upon as a dreamer, which may have been true, but he knew the country and the people much more intimately, through his own experience and missionary work, than men like McCloskey and McMaster and Preston, who had not his vision, nor his experience, nor his enthusiasm. Although the practical was not his forte, he gathered the practical around him, and allowed them to carry out the plans. It is more than likely that his figure was of heroic size, and will show forth more splendidly to a later day, though its meridian here was strangely fascinating. It drew attention and praise from all sorts of men, and sufficient criticism to provide the shadow, which is necessary to a human portrait. A charming character was the companion of Father Hecker, Rev. Augustine Hewit, who succeeded him as superior of the Paulist community; an intellectual man, with the grace of clear statement in his writing, and a great love for fiction. It was he who as editor of the *Catholic World*, gave us Miles Gerald Keon's immortal story, "Dion and the Sibyls," writing in himself with great pride a few pages that got lost, so cleverly that critics were not able to pick out the patch on the garment. He would have liked to write novels, and was pleased one day to be told by a novelist that his serious writings did more real good than the best fiction in the world.

Rev. Patrick McSweeney of St. Brigid's parish, a tall, solemn, earnest priest, was one of the thinkers of the time, and in the keen discussion of the school question made an experiment of his own towards the solution of the problem. With the consent of the cardinal he placed the church school in Poughkeepsie, where

he was pastor, in charge of the city. In return for the state aid he made the concessions now so well known in connection with a compromise school, such as removing all Catholic emblems and pictures from the class-rooms, holding pious exercises and teaching the catechism outside of school hours, and submitting the text-books to revision by the school-board of the city. The controversy which later sprang up about this compromise scheme created a tremendous din. While the people of Poughkeepsie were well satisfied with it, the extremists on both sides were not. The Protestants contended that it was purely sectarian, since it offered them no particular chance for work among Catholic children; and Editor McMaster denounced it savagely in his journal, as a betrayal of the principle of religion in education. As the pastor of St. Brigid's in New York, Dr. McSweeney labored for years, admired by his brethren and loved by his people for his devotion and his unshaken adherence to the loftiest principle. Rev. Richard Lalor Burtzell, pastor of the Epiphany parish, distinguished himself by his work as a pastor, and his skill in the practice of canon law. The canonist was not a personage in American clerical life, because for a long time there were few particular laws in existence, and the general canons of the Church were not much known. The ecclesiastical system was of the patriarchal kind, and the advent of canon lawyers was not received with enthusiasm. Dr. Burtzell conducted himself with such prudence and reserve, however, as to make his legal services inoffensive to all, and very useful to bishops and priests in the gradual growth of local law and practice.

Among the younger men notable during the Cardinal's time, his quondam secretary, Rev. John M. Farley, later pastor of St. Gabriel's, took both by his office and his personal character a prominent place. Trained in the official household, with which

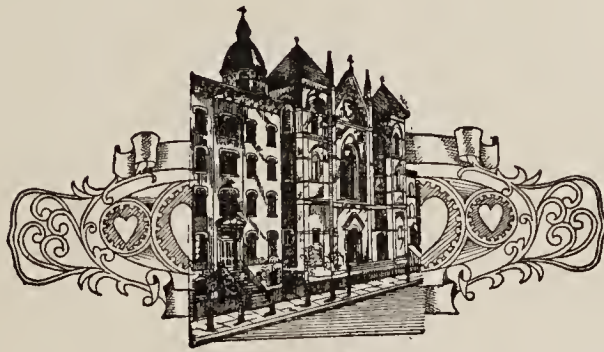
he had a long connection, he enjoyed a close view of the administration, intimacy with its chief officials also, and secured a good knowledge of the diocese, which he was afterwards to govern as its fourth archbishop. His moderate views, even temper, and shrewd disposition gave him a place in the administration at an early age, and kept him there in spite of the changes of time and policy. Rev. John F. Kearney, the rector of St. Patrick's in Mott Street, held a prominent position as the successor to Father Quinn in the old cathedral, and kept his prominence by devoted work in the parish under changing conditions, and by an independence of character and action that sprang from a keen mind, a vigorous body, and a hardy temperament. Rev. Henry A. Brann, the pastor of St. Elisabeth's, was eminent as a man of culture and of literary taste, a speaker of fine power and a writer of merit; he spoke five languages elegantly, was well read in many literatures, contributed to the leading reviews, published a few volumes, and at the same time kept up his ordinary labor as the pastor of a parish. Rev. John Edwards, pastor of the Immaculate Conception parish, began a long official career as treasurer of the Troy Seminary, and won distinction later as a devoted pastor and a member of the council, who worked unceasingly in every direction for the good of religion. These men are mentioned particularly because they stood for the various groups formed by community of feeling or ideas, and had a certain influence on the administration, on the progress of the diocese, and on the common thought.

Other sources of influence were the faculty of the Provincial Seminary, and the leading religious communities, the Jesuits and the Redemptorists. The Belgian priests of the seminary were of the most liberal type of Europeans, and well educated men; they had the proper acquaintance with ecclesiastical forms, and be-

came notable figures in the official gatherings; and as they had the training of the young clerics entirely in their hands, their influence was naturally large, and grew larger with time. The Jesuits change their superiors so often, and the rank and file also, that very few of their leaders remained long enough in New York at one time to become prominent in the administration; but the influence of the community, as directors of the colleges of Fordham and St. Francis Xavier's had its proper weight. The Redemptorists as individuals were even less intimate with the administration, but they had their representative at the council board, and often exercised an appreciable influence on events. In the ordinary course of life the direction of these various currents might not be visible; but at critical moments, such as came in the next administration for example, the nature and strength of all these influential men and communities became clearly visible. The clerical body at this period was of a rather mixed character and aspect; Irish of all degrees from the most extreme to the most American; Germans of the same variety; Americans as conservative as Archbishop Kenrick and as liberal as Dr. Cummings; Belgians accustomed to keep their balance amid contending parties; religious communities as widely differentiated as possible; and zigzagging through this body like electric currents burning questions of method rather than of principle, which stirred discussion but no faction and very little bitterness.

The Cardinal at the helm, serene, affable, and firm, kept the good ship to its course. The direct and imperious Vicar-General Quinn managed the willing men, repressed the difficult, recruited the treasury, and paid the bills. The forward movement of the Church kept all hands busy providing the absolute necessities, and the evident success, under conditions which promised heavy failure, gladdened all hearts, so that dissension became impossible.

It is much to the credit of Cardinal McCloskey that his administration of twenty-one years passed so smoothly. It may be true, as he himself said, that he no more than reaped the harvest prepared by Archbishop Hughes; at the least he enjoyed the honor of having stored it without the loss of a grain.



Holy Cross

CHAPTER XIX

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR PARISHES



Mrs. James Sadlier

THE Catholic population of the diocese increased to six hundred thousand during this period. The figures are only approximate, and perhaps not very accurate. For some years the report in Sadlier's almanac carried the above figure, whereas the diocese was increasing by bounds every year. The census reports were infrequent and unreliable. We may readily understand what interest was felt in the subject when the official almanac had the hardihood to give the same figures for several years.

Ireland continued to furnish the larger part of the Catholic population, but under better conditions than before. The governments interested had given immigration their attention, and the people sailed from home under the eye of officials, in better ships, with more comfort and speed, and were received on this side by watchful friends and agents, who helped them to their destination. The Civil War had a large influence on Irish immigration, in various ways. The agents of the Federal Government spread through Ireland the news of the great war, of the great bounty paid for soldiers, and offered to hundreds free passage to New York. The matter created considerable stir and indignation in Ireland, some

Right Reverend William Quinn



of the agents were arrested, and the affair was discussed in Parliament. Undoubtedly the scheme increased the Irish emigration, and secured hundreds of recruits for the army. The same agents visited Canada and aroused in the young men the desire to join the Federal army; and the interest thus awakened led to French-Canadian emigration into New England and New York on a large scale. German immigration increased also, as may be seen from the number of German parishes that were formed. A small number of Italians, Bohemians, and Poles also found their way to New York, sufficient to demand the formation of parishes in time. The great and rapid development of the country after the war made America the land of promise for Europeans of all classes, especially the laborers and farmers. The building of railroads attracted the Irish, farming attracted the Germans. The Irish not only settled in the city, but they scattered over the diocese, following the railroads.

The native Catholics and the old residents of foreign birth, a most respectable body, to whom time had brought success, fortune, and reputation, were represented in all the learned professions. The colleges after twenty years of effort had impressed their culture upon the people. Although it was the fashion to accuse the Catholic body of being wilfully ignorant, afraid of knowledge, and averse to culture, the accusation did not hold before such incidents as the public receptions to Dr. McCloskey when he arrived in New York as archbishop. The men who gathered about him were the substantial men of the time, merchants, lawyers, doctors, educators, politicians, judges, and leaders in polite society. In the twenty years of the Cardinal's administration the number of the cultivated class increased immensely, and made themselves felt in every department of life. Under the leadership of the clergy they rendered important services to the upbuilding of the Church in the diocese. The great effort

of the authorities was to provide churches for a population that increased thirty thousand a year. At one time the churches could not accommodate the people, and Editor McMaster, after his boisterous fashion, raised a great cry over the multitude forced to go without Mass on Sundays. He made no charges against individuals, but his meaning was that the clergy preferred to have fewer churches and more populous parishes. He did not have to complain long. In the short period of six years forty-two new parishes were formed, and as many churches opened throughout the diocese. This rate of progress was kept up for about ten years. The Cardinal added ninety parishes to the eighty-five of the previous period; he increased the number of chapels from twenty to fifty-five; Mass was said in remote places, called stations, in forty places; and the number of the diocesan clergy almost trebled, increasing from one hundred to two hundred and eighty. The convent priests doubled in number, increasing from sixty to one hundred and twenty; and they not only taught in the colleges and gave missions, but also served parishes, chaplaincies, and charities. At the close of the Cardinal's period, the people were fairly situated as to churches, priests, and regular service, if we suppose the entire population to have been eight hundred thousand; for there was one priest to every two thousand souls, and one church or chapel to every four thousand.

In the building of churches the country surpassed the city as to numbers, with fifty-eight churches for the thirty-two built in New York. As a rule, simplicity marked the architecture, for poverty was still a characteristic of the population. However, not a few churches were able to afford elegant decoration of the interior, and some exterior display, and also to indulge in architectural ideas. The Jesuit church on West Sixteenth Street provided a very fine example of Romanesque, the Redemptorists

built a beautiful Gothic structure near Grand Street, old St. Mary's erected a solemn façade with two towers, St. Bernard's and St. Agnes' parishes had churches of the most modern style, Gothic, with lofty clerestories and twin towers, and the Paulists erected a veritable temple of the middle ages, Gothic also, with tremendous nave, noble sanctuary, and splendid columns. The purveyors of church merchandise and art began to appear in the country after the war, and enabled the churches to secure better furnishings, decorations, and artistic necessities. These were mostly of the French and German pattern, and later of the Italian and Roman. Little was known of standards in such matters, and taste varied in consequence. The completion of the grand cathedral had an immense effect on the art of church-building, not merely from its powerful example, but because of the discussion of details which arose. The study of windows and stained glass, of altars and their furnishings, of vestments, sacred vessels, liturgical books, and rubrics in general, resulted in the spread of information among the interested, and led in time to imitation of the best models.

The celebration of the Mass and other church services became more beautiful and more attractive as the means to carry out the liturgy became more abundant. Marble altars of artistic quality, decorated sanctuaries well furnished, well-heated churches and comfortable pews, capable choirs with good organists and good music to deliver, although it could hardly be called church music, naturally drew the faithful and the unbeliever also. St. Peter's and St. Stephen's, the Jesuits' and the Cathedral, the Paulists and the Dominicans and the Redemptorists, were frequented by crowds, drawn by the splendid ceremonies, the good preaching, and the effective if operatic music. The Paulists in 1870 introduced the Gregorian chant and congregational singing. The

people of that period, both Catholic and Protestant, had been accustomed to Puritan severity in religious ceremonies. The gradual but brilliant development of the ritual surprised and attracted the Catholics no less than their neighbors; and it certainly had its influence on the whole country, for with this efflorescence of ceremony there began a new era for divine worship. The churches were thronged at the Sunday Masses, and the confessionals crowded on Saturdays. The work of sanctification was arduous and effective. Besides the ordinary means of winning souls to the right path and keeping them in it, the pastors indulged in more special methods. The mission became an important instrument for rousing the sluggish and recalling the reckless sinner. The multiplication of the convent communities had placed in the field several bands of missionaries, so that it was no longer difficult for a parish to secure an annual exhortation from these trained and experienced men. The mission became and remained a most popular and effective means of regenerating a parish and making it spiritually new.

Between times the fervor of the people was kept up by the popular devotions. The celebration of the Forty Hours at that time took the lead, and indeed became a social as well as a religious feature. The priests gathered at the place of celebration, to preach, to hear the innumerable confessions, to carry out the ceremonies; the people attended in such crowds as made hard labor necessary; and in the intervals of labor the assembled clergy discussed the passing history of the Church, the points of pastoral theology, and the local conditions. The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Our Lord followed, partly to supplement and in time to supplant the Forty Hours, which by the end of the period had lost its first glory, or rather been absorbed in a second glory, since the object of both devotions is the Person of the Lord. The

Sacred Heart devotion made the first Friday of every month a day of exposition and adoration, and it established a league or society to secure a systematic adherence and labor from thousands of members; a literature and an organization grew up around it, which time and experience made very effective, although the charin of spontaneity thereby suffered. The devotion of the Rosary and the celebration of the month of May in honor of the Blessed Mother of God, and also the wearing of the scapular of Mount Carmel, had a very large influence among the people in arousing veneration for Mary, and were carefully encouraged by the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The time of Lent was as usual made the occasion of public services in the churches, and in particular the Stations or the Way of the Cross became most popular. The devotion was carried out with great dignity in those days, and its weekly recital, amid prayers and the singing of the *Stabat Mater*, of the chief incidents in the Passion of the Lord, had a striking effect on the people.

For the better instruction of the children two institutions existed, the Sunday School and the library. The former remains with us, the latter has almost disappeared, except in the larger cities and parishes, among those who believe in the usefulness of a religious press. The catechism schools were numerous, popular, and effective in preparing the children for the Sacraments, but they never attempted much beyond the point of Confirmation, until the Paulist community began on a large scale the system of carrying the child through a graded course of instruction in religion up to the age of eighteen, graduated him, and gave him a diploma. This system has been in use ever since in many places. The library at one time enjoyed a great vogue, and was usually an attachment of the Sunday School; and the Catholic authors of the day, like Mrs. Sadlier, Lady Fullerton, Mrs. Dorsey,

Hendrik Conscience, and Abram Ryan, owed to it their wide popularity with their own people. For unknown reasons the library lost its popularity before the end of the period. Devotion was kept up also by means of parish societies, among which the sodalities of the Blessed Virgin for men and women were in high favor. Hardly a parish but had them, and on certain Sundays the members went to communion in a body, the ladies wearing white veils and the men their simple badges. The older people affected the Rosary Society. The attempt to organize societies of the young men, as much of a social as of a religious character, resulted very well in spite of ridicule and opposition, and the young men's societies grew so numerous that a national organization was formed towards the end of this period, and won substantial success. The Total Abstinence movement was the great movement of the time, however, and made a very striking display during its popular period. The temperance society was in those days as peculiar to a parish as its pious sodality; the general union of these numerous societies resulted in the usual conventions, meetings, lectures and speeches and resolutions, and also in the more stable work of rescuing the drunkards, restraining the intemperate, regulating the drinking-places, and warning the people of the grave danger to be apprehended from this source. It had its effect also upon the legislation of the day. The best men, priests and laymen, supported the movement and carried it through successfully, until more moderate and cautious use of alcoholic drinks prevailed.

The result of the careful parish organization, of the regular service, of the steady reception of divine grace from those fountains of grace, the Sacraments, showed powerfully in an enthusiasm for the faith, whose expression at least has not been surpassed either before or since that day. Archbishop Hughes found the

people of standing cold and staid, and the multitude timid and reluctant; he had to fire them with his own courage, enthusiasm, and initiative, teach them their own strength and their rich opportunities, and lead the way in all enterprises. His successor was not of that temperament, and could not have led in that splendid style; but he found a more willing and enterprising set of leaders, and an emancipated multitude, full of the joy of life in New York, ready for great deeds. First freed from the restraints of Europe, and again freed from the curb of Puritanism, which the war had weakened as a public force, the Catholic body had resumed its natural joyousness. Archbishop Hughes came to New York in 1838 almost in secret as far as its citizens were concerned; Archbishop McCloskey sat down to a banquet at Delmonico's, where Charles O'Connor and two hundred of the New York leaders welcomed him to his high place and his happy career in the metropolis. The enthusiasm and gayety of the people burst forth in the public parades, the grand religious ceremonies, and the gigantic bazaars, which provided the opportunity of displaying their strength, their numbers, and their power to themselves and their neighbors. In the parades on St. Patrick's Day all the Catholic organizations turned out, solemn Mass was attended in the cathedral, the city officials reviewed the parade, and the whole city lined the streets for the spectacle. On such occasions as the dedication of the cathedral, of the Protectors, or the opening of great churches, thousands of people gathered in the vicinity without any hope of getting inside. The great bazaar held in the month of November, 1878, in the new cathedral, just before the great temple was to be dedicated, was the most stupendous affair ever seen in the city. Thousands attended during its thirty days' session. The whole city contributed to its success; the gas company donated the illumination within, and an electric company

the illumination without; every parish had its own table and drew thither all the parishioners; and naturally the entire city hastened to witness a spectacle so novel and so gigantic. When the financial success was announced, a sum touching on \$200,000, the people were hugely pleased. They had done themselves honor both in the method and in the result.

The Froude incident roused them in a different fashion. James Anthony Froude, Oxford Professor of history, arrived in America in 1872, to deliver a series of lectures on English history with regard to Ireland. It was suspected and charged that his own government had sent him for the purpose of overcoming that rising influence of the Irish in American affairs, which threatened future relations between England and the Republic; and his first lecture in New York gave strong support to the charge, justifying English misrule as it did by the inherent defects of Irish character. Father Thomas Burke, a noted preacher of the Dominican order, happened to be in the country at the time, on a visit from Ireland. The leading members of the clergy and laity invited him to deliver public replies to the Froude lectures. The Academy of Music was secured, the event widely advertised, and the lectures delivered; Father Burke proved to be a splendid platform orator, witty, as well as eloquent, and his reply to Froude stirred the Catholic body as never before; and finally the agitation became so pronounced and widespread that Froude took ill and returned to England a sadder and a wiser man. The episode not only showed the increasing influence of the Catholics, but it displayed to themselves their own powers in a critical moment, and gave them confidence. They celebrated in the Academy in 1875, the centenary of Tom Moore, when a splendid assemblage listened to the graceful and polished periods of Richard O'Gorman, a popular and capable orator of that day.

The loss of the Temporal Power to the Pope afflicted them keenly, for it seemed a loss of prestige for the Church, and they denounced Victor Emmanuel in many a public meeting. The French Republic also came in for a scoring for its attacks on Catholic freedom, and Bismarck was regularly denounced in spirited resolutions for his attempt to destroy Catholicity in the German Empire. He was warned vigorously of his future trip to Canossa, and messages of sympathy and encouragement were sent to Herr Windthorst and the Catholic party. In these matters little more than expression of sympathy could be given, but in local affairs there was abundant room for energetic action. The people took up the fight against proselytism in public institutions, which were used by base creatures to destroy the religion of Catholic inmates. They won in the contest, although it was a long one. On occasions they attacked the *New York Herald* by general onslaught, as in 1875, when under the leadership of Father O'Reilly, the spirited pastor of St. Mary's, their assault for a time threatened the existence of Bennett's paper. Although James Gordon Bennett was a Catholic he consistently attacked prelates and people and conditions at his pleasure throughout his career, and at times so wantonly as to provoke reprisal. "Hunt the *Herald*," was the slogan of the war-party on this occasion, and their shouts of victory were heard in the streets when the newsdealers shipped thousands of unsold copies back to the proprietor. The Catholic Union, composed of the leading laymen of the time, undertook successfully to be the channel for Catholic energy on like occasions, and its history of ten years proved brilliant. It attacked proselytism with two bills for the legislature, one giving to magistrates the power of placing indigent children in asylums of their own faith, and the other securing for all wards of the State free exercise of their own religion. The

first bill passed without serious difficulty, but the other, for a time, threatened the future of Governor Cleveland. He did not wish to give opportunity to the bigots in his coming canvass for the Presidency, nor did he wish to offend Catholics by refusing to sign the bill. It was defeated for a time, and finally received the signature of Governor David B. Hill. The Union also took up the question of chaplains for the army and navy. The Federal Government was willing to accept the services of Catholic citizens in both branches of the military service, but gave them no chance to practise the duties of their religion. Soldiers and sailors were forced to attend Protestant service, and the bigots as usual resisted all attempts to show justice to the fighters, thus attaching a penalty to the service of the State for Catholic citizens. This injustice was overcome.

The good work of the Catholic Union continued for many years, and was handed on to the Catholic Club in the next administration. The men who led the people in these various struggles and demonstrations were eminent in their day, and worthy to lead. Charles O'Connor stood easily first, by his legal attainments, his general popularity, and his steadfast temperament. Like the Cardinal, of whom he was an affectionate friend, he did not possess a robust body; but his fame gave to his lightest utterance and his daily acts the force of a physical giant. Through the entire period he was present at all the important Catholic functions. His uprightness and sincerity no less than his legal ability made him the head and the chief ornament of the American bar. His services were freely given to the Church and its leaders, and his fame reflected brightly upon the Catholic body, who regarded him with the utmost pride and respect. Judge James T. Brady, another very distinguished lawyer of the time, rendered good service to the faith; Frederic Coudert was a third,

whose talent, success, and fidelity to the faith made a strong impression; and Richard O'Gorman, lawyer and orator, added to his personal and legal attainments the charm of an eloquence that endeared him to the multitude, as the spokesman on great occasions. Behind these men stood a noble group of skilful and accomplished lawyers, whose reputation brought glory to their people. In politics the Catholic body had won a place, although humble, from the beginning. They found their way first into the aldermanic board, then into the assembly and the State senate, and finally into Congress. John Kelly, the leader of Tammany, which he reorganized, won the greatest personal success in politics, and his popular title of Honest John Kelly was earned by his fine qualities. His was a strong character, consistent, talented, and full of the religious spirit. He faced the Knownothing leaders in Congress, and he routed a few of them in New York itself. The Catholic was not admitted into any political office without a struggle, while all places of significance were closed against him so thoroughly as not to be battered open.

Thus John D. Kernan, of Utica, failed of election to the governorship because of his faith. The Democratic majority bolted to the Republican nominee rather than have a Catholic governor; but the legislature itself proved more honorable, and gave him the election of United States Senator, a position which he filled with great credit. As the Catholics increased in power in New York, they began to look upon the first places as open to them, and to refuse acceptance of the stock argument that their faith made election impossible. William R. Grace, a Catholic merchant of wealth and talent, made a fight for election to the office of mayor in 1880, on the Democratic ticket, and won by the small majority of three thousand votes. Again the Protestant Democrats bolted to the opposite party rather than have a Catholic in

the first office of the city. Grace's victory made the breach in prejudice, and from that day there was no difficulty in electing a Catholic to any city office. Mr. Grace was a representative Catholic, of sincere devotion to the faith, and of a most charitable disposition; and his benefactions during life gave him a prominent and honorable place among the leaders of the Catholic community. In the business world the Catholic body was represented by a battalion of successful men. Eugene Kelly was one of the great bankers of the time, and took his place as a leader in all the activities of the Catholic body. His charity was taxed in every direction, and its noble exercise gave him and his family a splendid and enduring reputation. The Develin family, merchants of the first rank, were the prominent men of that day in all Catholic work, and the records show that they were first in every work for the good of the church and the people; princely men in their methods, and therefore loved as well as esteemed by priests and people. Henry Hoguet, Felix Ingoldsby, and Alexander Patton are frequent names in the local events. The best-known publishers were the Sadliers, whose services can hardly be overestimated at this date, so enterprising and lavish were they in the printing of books to suit every need and every taste. Later came the Benzigers, Patrick Kenedy, the Pustets, and Lawrence Kehoe to win reputation in the same department.

Other noted men were the O'Brien brothers, John Milhau, John Rodriguez, Bryan Lawrence, the Floyds, Daniel O'Connor, Florentio Escalante, Franklin Churchill, Paul Thebaud, George Hecker, and Henry James Anderson. There was a brilliant group of Catholic journalists and writers, and another of converts, whose deeds are given more fully in another chapter. The military group embraced General John Newton, General Martin T. McMahon, Colonel James Edward McGee, and a host of minor

characters. Even the most exclusive circles of society furnished the representatives of the faith, and we read in the journals of the formation of a society to found an infant asylum, whose patrons were Mrs. Delancey Kane, Mrs. Brockholst Cutting, Mrs. Paul Thebaud, Mrs. Eugene Kelly, Mrs. Maitland, Mrs. Frederic Neilson, Miss Leary, and Miss Van Etten. By the end of the period there was no department in which the Catholics were not eminent. Their public appearances in a body not only made them acquainted with themselves, but deeply impressed their neighbors. The thoughtful began to discuss in the public prints the rejuvenescence of "Romanism," and the firebrands made the same subject their excuse for reviving the old falsehoods about the Church. Their arguments had not the old-time grip on the people. The Catholics were now eminent in the financial circle, and their patronage had come to be a matter of moment. Their generosity puzzled observers. They were building and maintaining churches by the hundreds, educating and supporting the clergy, building up a charity system and a church-school system, aiding in the general work of the Church by support of the Pope, of the home and foreign missions, sending millions to their poor kindred in Europe, and at the same time bearing their burden of the State taxation. All was done by voluntary contribution. The renting of pews, the regular plate collections, the special collections, the holding of picnics, concerts, lectures, and bazaars: these were the sources of revenue. Yet in spite of the burden the people advanced in wealth and importance. They conquered prejudice, and then they conquered envy of their success. The good-nature of the general public accepted Catholic prominence and success as a fact, and paid it compliments. The whole city, the country in fact, wore green ribbon and emblem on St. Patrick's Day; it jeered at Bismarck when finally he gave up war on

the Catholic Germans and went to a mild Canossa; and the sour-hearted over the success of the persecuted and ostracized had to mourn Catholic triumph in secret.

The shadows of this triumph were present, and could be seen clearly in such documents as the Pastoral letter of the Provincial council of 1883, or in extravagant colors in the anti-Catholic journals. Mixed marriages became more and more frequent, and more disastrous in results to the Catholic party; more frequent, because the barriers of creed and race were diminishing, more disastrous, because religion was losing its hold on the average citizen. Catholics began to imitate the prevailing irreverence towards marriage; they wished to avoid the solemnities accompanying the sacrament; to escape the promulgation of the banns; to be married almost in secret, in the afternoon or evening; to escape the nuptial Mass and the reception of the sacraments by way of preparation. The Protestants had reduced marriage to the level of a civil contract, and were fast losing sight of its solemn significance to themselves and to society. The children of mixed marriages for the most part fell away from the faith, through mere indifference to all religion. The laws of the Council corrected these abuses and warned the faithful against yielding to the evil spirit of the time. The question of religion in the education of the child became a subject of heated discussion. Some Catholics failed to see the necessity of the church school, and found abundant reason to favor the common school. The trend of unreligious education was not then as plainly marked as at present. The Fathers of the Council rebuked opposition, and stated the principle and the argument of religious education for the children.

The popular secret societies at first would hardly admit a Catholic into their ranks, until their own temper and the Catholic

condition had changed for the better. Legends filled the air in those days of the vast influence of the Freemasons and the Odd-fellows, an influence said to be exercised in every department of the state and of society. Many Catholics joined them, even at the cost of excommunication, and soon fell into apostasy; and it took a long time and many severe punishments, such as deprivation of Catholic burial, to hinder fresh accessions to the secret societies from the Catholic ranks. The revolutionary spirit showed itself occasionally among the people, not powerful but impertinent, and vicious rather than capable. Its manifestation was usually made in the columns of the *Herald*, which catered regularly to that class; and sometimes a journal, parading as Catholic, and seeking support on that ground, devoted itself to abuse of the clergy, of the finances, of certain doctrines, and of the general discipline. It never became either profitable or successful. In social life intemperance became a source of danger among all classes, not only because the business of brewing and distilling entered upon an era of great development, but also because adulteration became a prime factor in the profits of these industries. The people were poisoned and slain by adulterated drinks more speedily and numerously than usual; and it required the whole force of the widespread temperance movement to rescue the intemperate from their wretched condition. Public amusements began to lose their reputation for respectability as the population increased and the character of managers declined. The Fathers of the Council warned their people against the picnics in vogue, the moonlight excursions, and other sources of contamination for the young. Extravagance in funerals became a great abuse, first in the display of carriages, and then in the rich coffins, the flowers, and the monuments wasted upon the dead. Various expedients were used to end this extravagance; general and parish

328 THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN NEW YORK

regulations, denunciation from the altar, and sometimes penalties. Until the folly of it finally seized the public mind, however, regulation and denunciation availed little. In some regions it still holds its sway.

The leaders worked heartily, and with considerable success, to destroy these various abuses, which were often serious, and handed on a set of grave consequences to the next generation. On the whole, however, the Catholic body of this period compares favorably in faith and morality with earlier and later days. Their activity and generosity, their enterprise and character, fill the unprejudiced with astonishment. Their success was genuine and large. They built the great cathedral, founded the charity system, opened the way into the United States Senate and the mayoralty, provided churches for an increase of 60,000, and sent their representatives into the very first positions in law, politics, and finance.



The Protectory



5575/4

BOSTON COLLEGE



3 9031 01342068 2

olic

MAR 17 1992

BX
1417
.N4
S6
v. 1

SMITH.

Bapst Library
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Mass. 02167

